Chapter V:Chronology of the collected surface finds and spatial distribution by periods

V .1 Introduction

As explained in Appendix III unlike in the first survey area, in the Skopian Montenegro survey samples of surface material were collected by individual transects during the quantification campaign. This not only saved us a great deal of time, but it eliminated the potential discrepancies between the number of counted and collected finds; discrepancies which often complicated the interpretation of the individual transect records in the first survey area, where counting and collections were carried out separately. In the second survey the individual transect collections always represented less than 100% of the material counted. Taking place within the period of a single agricultural season, they represent a more coherent and reliable record than the individual transect collections from the Sopot survey. Nonetheless if we are to use them for determining the site limits, it will be necessary to apply the same formula and adjust the transect collections to represent 100% of the material counted.

Another positive effect of the slightly modified collection strategy in the second survey area is that we had a raw preview of the chronological profile of the finds prior to the total grid surveys. Many of the suspicions raised in Appendix III proved correct after the processing and basic study of the gathered finds. Most apparent of all and in sheer contrast to the situation in the first survey was the absence of more than a few chronological periods in the surface record. That there lacked the dazzling variety of pottery finds encountered in the Sopot survey became evident by the first year's campaign, though admittedly there was a hope that the more detailed study of the finds will reveal at least tiny vestigial traces of prehistoric settlement. As will be shown, possible traces of prehistoric settlement were indeed found, but more than 99% of the material belonged to some of the historic periods within the last two millennia. In this respect the dating of the material seemingly posed a lesser challenge, but the fact that the majority of the finds didn't appear in discrete clusters, comprising integral assemblages was in itself problematic. As a result the dating of a few fabric groups remains uncertain, even within a broader chronological framework. The same low chronological resolution as in the first survey area was used, which as we saw, prevents finer historical interpretation.

It seems that traces of prolonged occupational activity date to two, possibly three broader chronological periods. Nevertheless the problems of interpretation encountered in the Sopot survey are no less acute. 15 certain and 4 possible clusters were discovered in the second survey, nearly the same number as in the Sopot survey. Each of these separate sites had to be interpreted, their limits drawn and the character of the material that comprised them analyzed. Although for the greater part these were single-period establishments, they were discovered amidst a fairly dense carpet of off-site material, produced over the past several centuries by the villages Kučevište and Pobužje. Often the quantity of the total surface record on the site locations didn't surpass the quantity of off-site material on certain field blocks in the western half of the basin. To further complicate matters, the material that comprises the clusters of archaeological finds on the eastern ridge spreads in an uneven carpet across much of the area's eastern half. Thus these sites were not only difficult to detect during field survey, but they also needed to be defined against the contemporary background scatter. In these cases, as in Appendix II dealing with the surface material from the Sopot survey, we will have to employ a sort of residual analysis to test the on-site status of suspected concentrations[374]. Like some of the sites discovered in the Sopot

[374] For this method see, J. Bintliff, P. Howard, 51-91, 1999.

survey, these are not always compact, single-core clusters. We will see that a number of sites consist of two equal, closely spaced cores or one larger, accompanied by a closely positioned, smaller core. Some clusters also feature an intermediary zone, characterized by artifact densities lower than the core but higher than the surrounding background[375]. Finally, the interpretation of these findings inevitably raises the question of what thesesites actually represent in socio-historical terms.

Of no lesser importance is the character of the off-site carpet generated by the villages at the mountain foot[376]. Most important of all, its chronology could point to the approximate date of origin of the present-day settlement pattern. As discussed in chapter IV, it is quite possible that the basis for the local network of villages was established as early as the Late Byzantine Period. Establishing an approximate lower chronological limit for the off-site debris will be an important contribution to the understanding of the history of human settlement in the broader region of Skopian Montenegro. The distribution pattern exhibited by this off-site carpet is itself baffling. Typically for off-site carpets it extends continuously over a large piece of territory with gradual tendencies of decrease along certain axes. At places however this regular distribution is interrupted by sudden peaks, zones of higher artifact density that differ little from the rest of the clusters of archaeological material. As suspected during the total grid survey, most of the clusters that emerged on the western ridge consisted of discarded, rather than unearthed material. Hopefully the analysis of the composition of this material by fabric groups will shed more light on these anomalous concentrations of off-site debris.

In the end in order to understand the long-term developments in the surveyed basin, it will be necessary to turn to the broader regional context of the Skopje Basin, with a particular emphasis on the region of Skopian Montenegro. The high degree of integrity of human settlement in this micro-region was stressed in chapter IV. It is the key to understanding why the surveyed basin never grew into a stable settlement niche, although it had the potential to become one.

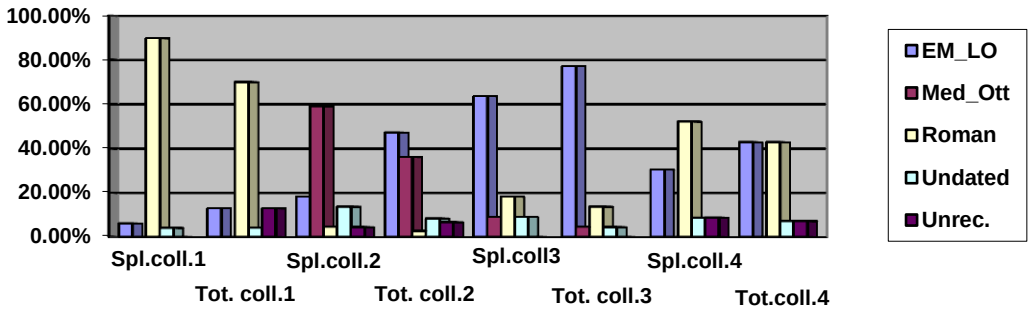
Before discussing the chronology of the collected finds and their spatial distribution, a word is needed on the method of finds processing, which also slightly differed from the one applied to the material from the Sopot survey (see Appendix III). Already at the stage of surface material collection, it became clear that a very large portion of the finds consisted of badly worn, often completely defaced fragments of architectural ceramics. The collections were weighed and counted and all duplicate and badly worn tile or brick specimens were discarded prior to washing and further study. This was possible thanks to the fact that over large zones of the survey area including several dozens field blocks, the bulk of the material consisted of a few, repeating types of brick or tile of the same fabric. Based on brief notes taken during the counting and weighing of the finds and keeping a few total collections, it was possible to observe a consistent tendency in cases when the total collections were studied (graph V_1). The categories of Late Ottoman and Early Modern and unrecognizable material are regularly increased in the total collections. These are simply the categories that we wanted to get rid off: in the case of the Late Ottoman to Early Modern finds, the discarded finds almost exclusively consisted of brick and tile fragments, while the category of unrecognizable material always consisted of completely worn and rounded ceramic fragments that could offer little specific information. The effect of this selection strategy

[375] All these phenomena find close parallels among the results of similarly designed research in the Eastern Mediterranean. S.E. Alcock, et al. 137-170, ed. I. Morris, 1994;J. Bintliff, 200-215, eds. M. Pasquinucci, F. Trément, 2000.

[376] J. Bintliff, A. Snodgrass, 506-513, 1988; T.J. Wilkinson, 31-46, 1989.

is that it slightly minimizes the powerful presence of the finds datable to the past two centuries. This must be taken into account while discussing the artifact densities by period. On most grid collections they are probably greater than indicated on the thematic maps, as these don't include the discarded categories. In cases where the margin is larger, such as in collection 2 on graph V_1, the actual quantities will be specified in the text.

Graph V_1: Chronological profiles of sample and total collections from various grid units



As with the first survey area, the detailed descriptions and analysis of the overall surface record, including the architectural remains and the surface material distribution by periods are given in separate appendices III and IV. In this chapter we present the final interpretations including the size and inner structure of the on-site clusters, definition and interpretation of the off-site zone and satellite clusters, analysis of the site locations and socio-historical interpretation of the discovered surface remains. Descriptions of the surface material distribution and fluctuations in artifact densities will be as cursory as possible.

V.2 The problem of the prehistoric settlement in the survey area (tables 1-2, Appendix IV)

The present day relief and the pedo-geological substrate of the survey area seemingly offer favorable conditions for the emergence of early prehistoric farming communities. The entire survey area is covered by the same or very similar Tertiary sediments to those covering the basins along the Middle Vardar and its eastern tributaries. Recall that the earliest farmers in the Central Balkans occupied this zone by the end of the 7th millennium BC[377]. Admittedly the settlements from this period tend to concentrate on slightly lower attitudes, in the immediate vicinity of running or still water. But in this respect too, the survey area wasn't deficient in water close to the surface. At least in the recent past, large portions of the surveyed basin were swampy, while the majority of the streams coming from the mountainside are perennial. Possibly the slightly cooler and more humid climate conditioned growth of forests in this peripheral zone of the Skopje Basin confining the habitation zone of the Early Neolithic communities to the interior of the basin, closer to the Vardar and the last remnants of the Central Balkan Lake[378].

But even later prehistoric periods were only represented by a very small fraction of the collected surface material. There lacks even a single ceramic assemblage broadly datable to the

[377] M. Garašanin, 79-114, ed. A Benac, 1979; D. Zdravskovski, 55-63, 2008.

[378] A. Sherratt, 261-305, eds. I. Hodder, G. Isaac, N. Hammond, 1981; J. Bintliff, E. Farinetti et al. 665-674, 2006.

Bronze or the Iron Age. This came as a surprise, especially after the realization of the richness of prehistoric material found in the seemingly inhospitable and dry area of Sopot. We expected to find at least half of the prehistoric periods documented in the Sopot survey in the presently far more fertile region of Skopian Montenegro. But after the full study of the collected finds, it was possible to identify only a small group of prehistoric shards and a small fabric group, possibly datable to some late prehistoric epoch. The small number of finds and their undiagnostic character makes the search for direct parallels hardly attainable[379].

The amount and the pattern of dispersal of these finds recall the situation in the first survey area during the Bronze Age. Admittedly the collections of prehistoric pottery from Skopian Montenegro present an even more extreme case, as we don't know if they formed a contemporary assemblage. Therefore their distribution should be analyzed separately. It must be emphasized that the very small volume of the collection came to light only after the processing of the finds. These "discoveries" were unintentional and came both from the individual transect and the total grid collections.

The first group of securely dated prehistoric fragments didn't form a coherent fabric category, but the shapes and the fabric features clearly pointed to a prehistoric date. Of the 12 fragments securely dated to prehistory, 5 came from the transect collections (maps V_1 and 2). These are all individual finds spaced at least 250 meters apart. Two were collected from the upper portions of the eastern ridge, from field blocks 38b and 22b and another pair was collected from the western ridge, from field blocks 167 and 208b. The fifth fragment came from field block 377a from the southeast corner of the survey area, near the floor of the basin. The grid survey covering field block 38b confirmed the presence of small quantities of prehistoric material: two fragments came from grid units within the limits of this field and another one in the northern end of the grid, about 70 meters away (map V_3). 350 to 500 meters to the south of grid 1, below the tip of the eastern ridge, the total grid survey revealed another dispersed group of late prehistoric fragments. Two isolated finds came from grids 11 and 4, spaced about 110 meters apart. Finally, a pair of prehistoric shards was discovered among the total collection from the central unit on grid 6, which gave the highest density of 1.33 fragments per 100 sq meters.

At present it is impossible but to speculate about the real significance of these remains. But following the interpretation offered for similar phenomena discovered in the Sopot survey and in other intensive survey projects, one could conclude that these were probably the traces of smaller and not very long-lived installations[380]. The facts that these finds were discovered at considerable distances from each other and that the find-spots differ little in terms of density or the degree of preservation offers a further support for this thesis. Nucleated prehistoric settlements are likely to leave more substantial surface clusters; as we know from the experience of the Sopot survey where even hamlets not larger than half a hectare produced full domestic assemblages consisting of hundreds of pottery fragments. On the other hand, the chances of survival of prehistoric material originally discarded on the surface are infinitesimally small[381]. In fact it is quiet possible that these prehistoric sites were of a similar size to the later Roman farmsteads, superimposing some of the prehistoric remains. If this observation is only partly correct, it will imply that the precedent for the settlement pattern during the Roman Period with its focus on the summit of the eastern ridge was set many centuries, perhaps even millennia

[379] We'll see that not too many prehistoric sites are known from the Skopje Basin. D. Mitrevski, 449-457, ed. B. Hänsel, 1998; D. Mitrevski, 1997; I. Mikulčić, 17-35, 1982.

[380] J.L. Bintliff, P. Howard, A.M. Snodgrass, 139-168, 1999.

[381] E. Neustupný, 49 ed. E. Neustupný, 1998.

earlier. However one cannot assign too much weight to the observed overlapping distribution patterns. The coincidence of the scarce late prehistoric finds with sites of later historic periods could result from the favorable taphonomic factors rather than reflecting long-term continuity in the focus of local settlement[382]. As discussed in appendix IV, the occurrence of small quantities of prehistoric material on later historical sites is also a consequence of the increased survey intensity on these locations[383]. But the total absence of this material from grid units covering field blocks in the central sections of the survey area and on the western ridge clearly indicates that the distribution of this material isn't isotopic, nor is it necessarily linked with the Roman sites. The pair of late prehistoric shards collected from the western ridge came from individual transect collections and were spatially unrelated to sites from later periods, as were the collections from grids 1 and 4 on the eastern ridge. Plausible as it seems, the thesis that these scattered finds are the vestigial remains of prehistoric farms or huts is difficult to support without repetitive collections from these find-spots or perhaps, sub-surface research. One shouldn't exclude the possibility that these scatters were derived from non-residential site categories, such as burials, votive pits or other types of sub-surface deposits[384].

At the moment, it remains unknown if these fragments are datable to a single prehistoric period. Even if we allow that at least some of these find-spots are the remains of farmsteads, their chronology remains problematic. Scholars that have studied small dispersed prehistoric settlements believe that even if all such settlements are datable within single prehistoric period, they weren't particularly long-lived and it is very unlikely that more than a few were truly contemporary[385].

The second group of finds with a possible prehistoric date forms a coherent fabric category. Although they are slightly more numerous amounting to a total of 18 fragments, they were less dispersed than the heterogeneous group of securely dated prehistoric material (cf. tables 1 and 2, Appendix IV, map V_3). 16 fragments came from two locations near the summit of the eastern ridge, covered by grids 11 and 6. The larger cluster was discovered on grid 11, where we recorded the maximum density of 3.3 fragments per 100 sq meters. The second smaller cluster was discovered in the central parts of grid 6, less than 200 meters to the south and on slightly lower ground. In both cases the core of the clusters is limited to a single grid unit (about 150 sq meters) with individual fragments appearing on units contingent to the core. The other two fragments belonging to this fabric class came from grids 8, 100 meters to the north of the cluster on grid 6 and from the northern end of grid 2, about 280 meters northwest of the cluster on grid 11. Examples of this fabric never appear outside the higher portions of the eastern ridge and not a single shard came from the individual transect collections.

Clearly these are more substantial clusters and the possibility that they are vestigial traces of prehistoric farmsteads seems even likelier. However there remains the problem of their chronology, along with the chances that they were a component of some later assemblages. Judging by the fabric features and the primitive hand-modeling this pottery is also prehistoric. But suspicions regarding its dating were stirred by its pattern of distribution. Both grids 11 and 6 cover Roman Period sites and the isolated examples from grids 2 and 8 also came from amidst or

[382] J.L. Bintliff, P. Howard, A.M. Snodgrass, 156, 1999; M. Kuna, 29-44, eds. J. Bintliff, M. Kuna, N. Venclová, 2000; for criticism see, J. L. Davis, Are the landscapes of Greek prehistory hidden? 22-35, eds. S.E. Alcock, J.F. Cherry, 2004.

[383] J.L. Bintliff, P. Howard, A.M. Snodgrass, 145, 149, 1999.

[384] See examples in M. Godja ed. 2004.

[385] J.L. Bintliff, E. Farinetti, et al. 665-674, 2006.

near dense clusters of Roman material. At the same time however, there is a considerable overlap with material securely dated to prehistory, while the Roman clusters on the lower terraces of the eastern ridge and near the valley floor never included fragments of the possible late prehistoric fabric, although the assemblages differed little from those that constituted the Roman clusters on the eastern ridge. The find-spot of the highest artifact density for the group securely dated to prehistory on grid 6 is also the core of the second, smaller cluster of the possible prehistoric fabric group. There are further overlaps on grids 8 (field block 22b) and 11. Only on grids 4 and 1 do the securely dated prehistoric shards appear unaccompanied by examples of the discussed fabric group, although a fragment of the latter group came from the northern end of grid 2, at a distance of only 65 meters from the scatter of securely dated prehistoric fragments from the eastern half of grid 1 (field block 38b).

Thus the pattern already exhibited by the group of finds securely dated to later prehistory is partly repeated and enhanced. There is a clear focus on grids 11 and 6 (point 501 on map V_2), which is a location analogous to the one occupied by the fortification described in Appendix III (point 540). Finds securely dated to prehistory were found dispersed over a somewhat larger area, with a few fragments coming from the upper terrace, above the contour line of 520 meters. Understandably there is very little ground to speculate about the chronological relation between the two groups of fragments, especially because the securely dated finds do not form a homogenous group in terms of fabric categories. In this particular case we believe that regardless of the considerable overlap between the two groups, they don't appear to form an integral contemporary assemblage. There are considerable difference in the fabric characteristics between some of the fragments securely dated to prehistory and the possible prehistoric fabric group. The complete absence of examples of the latter group on grid 1, one of the find-spots featuring slightly greater concentration of securely dated prehistoric material cannot be overlooked, as much as its fairly sporadic appearances among the possible prehistoric clusters on grids 6 and 11. Either these two groups represent different prehistoric strata or the fabric for which we suggested a possible prehistoric date belongs to the Roman assemblage. As demonstrated in appendix IV, both interpretations agree well with the distribution maps. It was in any case deemed important to briefly consider the implications of there being a separate prehistoric fabric group, apart from the handful of finds with a secure prehistoric date.

Even though remaining unanswered the issue has no impact on the long-term settlement dynamic in the second survey. If we adopt the view that these scatters are the vestigial remains of prehistoric farms, the similarity with the distribution of the settlements from the Roman Period is indeed remarkable. As will be shown when discussing remains of later periods, most settlements in the survey area will retain the rank of farmsteads, whether isolated or forming dispersed networks. The preference for locations close to, or at the very summit of the eastern ridge could be related to a number of factors, primarily agricultural exploitation. It is notable that this type of locations is analogous to the micro-location of the modern village of Mirkovci situated less than 2 kilometers to the west of the surveyed ridge. These flattened ridges offer both relative safety from eventual floods and an immediate access to the agricultural land on the lower slopes and on the basin's floor. At the same time, from these micro-locations it is possible to observe a large portion of Montenegro's foothills. The local north-south roads linking the plain with the mountain usually follow the crests of these ridges, like the modern asphalt road running between Skopje and Pobuže. This natural corridor passes immediately next to the cluster on grid 11 and less than 100 meters east of the cluster on grid 6. Further north, it probably passed by the small

scatter of later prehistoric finds on grid 1 and the Late Roman fortification that marks the northeast corner of the surveyed basin.

The couple of securely dated prehistoric fragments from the summit of the western ridge are in all aspects unrelated to the prehistoric material from the eastern ridge (map V_3a). These finds are made in different fabrics and show little or no similarity to the prehistoric shards from the eastern ridge. In all probability they belong to a different prehistoric period. This is consistent with later developments for as will be shown, the two ridges were never occupied within the same time-period. Although seemingly there is very little difference between the neighbouring ridges, there are certain peculiarities regarding access to communication and vegetation. In this respect the western ridge is slightly disadvantageous, being more isolated from the local road-network and drier.

V.3.1 The Roman Period: overall and on-site distribution(2^{nd}-4^{th} c AD? Tables 3-22, graph 1-21, Appendix IV)

This is the earliest period for which there is a substantial surface evidence for human occupation in the survey area. We will see that such a discontinuous sequence of settlement is a typical feature of the Skopje Basin. As in the first survey area, it isn't possible to work with a more refined chronology. The upper and the lower limits of the period remain vaguely defined. This is expected considering the fact that so far, very little is known about Early and Mid Imperial Scupi. Thankfully the ongoing salvage excavations on the city's eastern necropolis have unearthed hundreds of burials dated between the early 2^{nd} and the early decades of the 4^{th} century AD. The excavated material mostly comes from enclosed, undisturbed deposits and was a precious source for comparison[386]. Close direct parallels were found for most of the fabric groups broadly dated to the Roman Period. In fact it is not impossible that the material from both locations was made in the same fabrics. However this hardly determines the actual dating of the survey finds. On a few locations along with the bulk of the plain, soft fabrics, there are rare fragments of fine Late Roman sigillata, also found in late 4^{th} century deposits in Scupi[387]. At the same time there lacks among these collections, the local pottery production that typifies the 5^{th} and the 6^{th} centuries AD. This is a better known and more recognizable material. The Late Roman pottery from Scupi was published several years ago and there are parallels on a number of other sites in the Skopje Basin dated through architectural survey and excavations[388]. As will be shown there are finds datable to the last two centuries of Antiquity in the surface record, but they are unrelated to the main concentrations of finds broadly dated to the Roman Period. Hence the proposed upper chronological limit rests solely on negative evidence and consequently, it should be accepted with caution.

Material datable to the Roman Period is the second most dominant chronological group in the surface record of the second survey area. Over 3670 fragments were dated to the Roman Period and it is certain that their number is much greater (table 3, Appendix IV). Nearly 50% of the material from certain collection units represented fragments worn beyond recognition, which

[386] This material is yet to be published; courtesy to L. Jovanova, a custodian at the Museum of Skopje in charge of the excavations, for allowing me to look at some of the material. So far only the Late Roman pottery from Scupi has received a separate study, M. Ončevska-Todorovska, 2004.

[387] M. Ončevska-Todorovska, 45-48, Tab. 1-6, 2004.

[388] I. Mikulčić, Docnorimski grobovi od Skupi, 109-143, *Godišen Zbornik na Filozofskiot Fakultet* 26, 1974; I. Mikulčić, N. Nikuljska, Markovi Kuli-Vodno, kaj Skopje 65-74, *Macedoniae Acta Archaeologica* 5, 1979; N. Čausidis, 183-197, 1989.

we decided to discard after weighing and counting. Later it was discovered that the majority of these tiny and defaced shards were in fact small bits of Roman brick and tile. Was this material kept and included in the analysis, the number of Roman finds would certainly grew for up to 50%. Nevertheless because the number of thrown fragments of Late Ottoman-Early Modern tile is many times greater, in reality Roman material comprises less than 30% of the total surface record. In absolute terms the Roman collection from Skopian Montenegro is at least thrice as large as the collection from Sopot. This neatly coincides with the three times larger area of the Roman settlement in the second survey.

As in the first survey area, Roman finds are to be found over a large portion of the surveyed basin. Almost 40% of the field blocks featured at least one fragment datable to the Roman Period, which is again remarkably similar to the percentage of field blocks with Roman material in the first survey. There is however an important difference. While in the first survey Roman finds were found in virtually all survey sections, in Skopian Montenegro over 98.5% of the material was collected from field blocks to the east of the Skopje-Kučevište asphalt road. Thus the main focus of residential and other activities was obviously on the eastern ridge and in the central survey sections. Consequently the mean overall density recorded by the transect survey is extremely skewed, with only 1.8 fragments per 1000 sq meters. In the case of the Roman material in the second survey, the mean district values are far more reliable references. The mean density of Roman material on field blocks east of the Skopje- Kučevište road is nearly 3 fragments per 1000 sq meters, while on field blocks to the west, on average the transect survey recorded 2.2 fragments per 1 hectare. Moreover as collections by individual field walking transects were not particularly thorough on a number of site locations, it is likely that even these values are a slight underestimate, especially for field blocks in the eastern survey half.

The analysis of the statistical distribution of the Roman finds by field blocks defined three basic zones of artifact density. The great majority of field blocks or over 80% belong to the zone of low or very low artifact density, featuring between 0 and 2.5 fragments per 1000 sq meters. Except for the few cases of data loss or where transect collections were purposefully less intensive, these field blocks cover the off-site zone. The second zone characterized by artifact densities ranging between 2.5 and 11.3 fragments per 1000 sq meters is predictably far more limited. Less than 20% of all field units belong to this zone. This group includes field blocks that feature artifact densities close to the mean value for the eastern survey half, but also units that feature densities that are 2-3 times higher. It is therefore useful to further distinguish between the group of field blocks featuring between 2.5 and 5.1 fragments per 1000 sq meters, which roughly equals the median value for this survey area and field blocks with artifact densities ranging between 5.1 and 11.3 fragments per 1000 sq meters. The former group comprises less than 9%, the latter 11% of all field units in the second survey. On some of these field units the total grid survey revealed on-site densities, at least over portions of the field block area, while on others, scatters of average or lower than average artifact density. The zone of the highest artifact density consists of field blocks on which the transect survey recorded over 11.3 fragments per 1000 sq meters. They comprise only 3% of all field walking units and unless there were radical changes in the surface record during the field survey, they signaled the presence of Roman sites. This is in tune with the findings of the Sopot survey where the on-site densities were at least two to three times the mean district values and on the great majority of sites they were many times higher.

There is a more or less clear pattern in the spatial distribution of the various zones of artifact density (map V_4a). Field blocks featuring between 5.1 and 11.3 and those featuring over 11.3 fragments per 1000 sq meters don't appear to the west of the Skopje-Kučevište road.

They are limited to the eastern ridge and the northern half of the central survey section. We see that field blocks that belong to these two zones almost always appear together, forming fairly extensive patches of high artifact densities. Whenever the collections by individual field walking transects included at least one third of the material counted, there emerged roughly concentric patterns with one or two field blocks featuring over 11.3 fragments per 1000 sq meters, surrounded by a few field blocks that featured between 5.1 and 11.3 fragments per 1000 sq meters. These clusters of field blocks usually occupy an area of between 1 and 2 hectares. In some cases as on the top of the eastern ridge, they are contingent, forming large continuous belts of high or very high artifact density. As a result it is difficult to count their exact number, although it is evident that there were at least 7 or 8 such clusters in the eastern survey section. There is an apparent concentration along the top and the upper portion of the eastern ridge, where one can observe at least 6 such clusters, centered on field blocks 351, 336, 320, 22a-b, 1-2 and the northernmost on field block 37. Only two clusters were revealed by the transect survey collections along the lower terraces of the eastern ridge: one centered on field blocks 47a, 49-50, the other on field blocks 289a-290a, 250 meters to the south. In the central survey section, there is one potential find-spot on field block 137, near the northern survey limit. A larger concentration of field blocks featuring between 5.1 and 11.3 fragments per 1000 sq meters was revealed on field blocks 84-85 and 89, about 300 meters to the east and also located by the northern limit of the survey area.

Field blocks featuring over 11.3 or between 5.1 and 11.3 fragments per 1000 sq meters rarely appear isolated. Unless related to the small size of the field block artificially enhancing the artifact density or to the inconsistent collections by individual transect units, these isolated peaks could signal the presence of a different site category. But in the majority of cases, the roughly concentric pattern is further emphasized by the distribution of field blocks featuring between 2.5 and 5.1 fragments per 1000 sq meters. They too tend to cluster around field blocks with artifact densities higher than the mean district value and are nearly absent from the western survey half. Indeed one notes that this group of field units often forms perfect outer rings around the zones of high or very high artifact densities. They are mostly concentrated on field blocks to the west of the high-density clusters along the top of the eastern ridge and on the stretches that separate the high-density clusters on field blocks 47a, 49-50, 66, 289a-290a and 137. Finally, field blocks featuring less than 2.5 fragments per 1000 sq meters of transect survey cover over 95% of the western ridge, but they also cover the greater portion of the central survey section and considerable stretches on the eastern ridge. On the eastern ridge they often form larger compact stretches separating the zones of average or higher than average artifact density. These are exemplified by the large group of field blocks in the northeast corner of the survey, on the very top of the eastern ridge and by the nearly sterile stretch separating the high-density clusters on the upper portions of the ridge from those on its lower terraces.

Unfortunately this overall pattern of distribution came to light only after the study of the collections by individual transects. By that time, the total grid surveys were already being carried out and the only guidance we had for determining the focus and the limit of the total collections was the overall artifact density. As anticipated during this stage of fieldwork, the zones of high overall artifact density don't necessarily overlap with the zones of high density of Roman material. This is most clearly reflected on the western ridge where not a single Roman shard was found among the transect collections from field units featuring very high overall density. But there are also mismatches on certain field blocks in the central survey section and on the eastern ridge, such as field block 263 by the Skopje-Kučevište asphalt road or field blocks 38a/b-40a/b

in the northeast corner of the survey area. The chronological composition of the surface record on each of these locations is given in Appendix IV. Here it suffices to mention that the distribution of the total surface record in the second survey in general was chiefly determined by the distribution of the predominant Late Ottoman-Early Modern material. Nevertheless when present in larger quantities, theRoman material did have an effect on the amount of the total surface record, even on field blocks where material dated to the last couple of centuries was absent or present in modest quantities.

Thus the zones of high density of Roman material almost always coincided with the zones of high overall density, but the opposite wasn't always the case. This circumstance explains the fairly satisfactory coverage of the zone of higher density of Roman material by the regular grid survey (map V_4b). More than 50% of the field blocks that feature over 11.3 fragments per 1000 sq meters were included in the total survey. Most of the field blocks that belong to the high density zone and were left out of the total grid survey presented cases where upon return, it was simply impossible to locate the large quantities of surface finds counted during the transect survey. These include two groups of field blocks situated along the lower terraces of the eastern ridge, field blocks 47a-b, 49, 50 and 66 and 281a-290a and field block 328b along the eastern limit of the survey area. It should be noted that although nearly all of these field blocks featured higher than average overall artifact densities, only one or two belonged to the zone of the highest overall density. As explained in greater details earlier in this chapter and in Appendix IV, the changing surface conditions presented a serious problem in the second survey area. Equally disturbing was the accidental discovery of a medium-sized Roman site on field blocks 102-104a/b where the transect collections recorded an almost complete absence of Roman finds. Other examples of field blocks where the high density of Roman material wasn't reflected in the overall artifact density recorded by the transect survey were field blocks 351, 348 and 342. Although these three field blocks feature overall artifact density higher than the average, the perceived quantities of surface material were simply deemed too low to merit detailed attention. In this case however, after realizing the prominence of Roman material among the transect collections we were able to locate a denser cluster and regular grid survey was carried out over both field blocks 348 and 351.

In addition to field blocks featuring higher density of Roman finds, inadvertently the total grid survey included field blocks with average or lower than average density of Roman material. In fact nearly 40% of the gridded area falls outside the zone of very high density of Roman material, excluding field blocks where the transect survey indicated the presence of other periods or where collections by individual transects were less intensive. This total coverage of the off-site zone opened an important insight into the distribution of the finds beyond the site limits and it also enabled us to roughly assess the true density of Roman material on the basis of the transect survey record.

The total grid survey revealed at least one very significant weakness in the data produced by the transect survey. We encountered the same problem in the first survey area. It is very difficult to predict the true artifact density and nearly impossible to draw the limits of the sites on the basis of the transect survey record. This is particularly problematic in the second survey because sites were often smaller than 1000 sq meters. The large and irregular field block can hardly provide an adequate spatial frame for documenting surface clusters of such size. It is merely possible to point to the presence and the approximate locations on the basis of the collections by individual transect units. Nevertheless these proved to be an indispensable tool for delimiting the site limit on locations left out of the regular grid survey, as well as for delimiting

the extent of the site halos. Although highly focused, the total grid survey with its coverage of only 10% of the survey area could only hope to document a portion of the true number of sites and satellite clusters. Even when a site location was recognized during the course of fieldwork and total collections were carried out, it was often very difficult to determine the focus and the limits of the regular grids. This was true regardless of the fact that in comparison to the first survey area, the maximum densities recorded on the Roman sites were higher, with a considerable difference between the minimum and the maximum value. As explained in Appendix IV, two main factors caused these difficulties: the fairly low quality and obtrusiveness of the material datable to the Roman Period and the irregular, focalized patterns of distribution, both on-site and in the immediate surroundings of the sites. This latter circumstance proved particularly problematic not only during fieldwork, but also during the analysis of the grid survey records. Only on a minority of examples was it possible to observe a concentric pattern of distribution across the site areas. The great majority of the sites revealed by the total grid survey consisted of at least two cores separated by wider stretches of lower artifact density, in some cases dropping below the site threshold. These considerable fluctuations in the artifact density over relatively short distances continue outside the site areas, with low peaks regularly appearing in the halo zone. Predictably the total grid survey rarely managed to capture these satellite clusters of intermediary density, but their presence was often picked up by the transect survey. In order to obtain a fuller understanding of the extent of the site area and the distribution in the halo zone, it was necessary to combine the results of the transect and the grid survey.

The unequal intensity was another significant challenge in using the collections by individual field walking transects as records of artifact density[389]. In the second survey area, on nearly 70% of the field units the transect collections included over 33% of the material counted. Collections including less than 30% of the material counted were mostly related to data loss or to a deliberate decision to save the surface record for the total grid collections. Even smaller samples would have recorded all major periods in the surface record, but comparing the density of certain categories of material on field blocks where the transect collections included 40 and 60% of the counted material is understandably misleading. This factor must be taken into account when trying to draw the site limits on locations not included in the regular grid survey.

But as elaborated in a greater detail in Appendix IV, adjusting the individual transect collections so that they represent 100% of the material counted results only in minor and localized corrections (map V_4c). Overall there is a slight increase in the number of field units featuring very high or higher than average density of Roman material. About 4% of the field units belong to the very high density zone, while 18% feature average or higher than average artifact density (cf. graphs 20 and 21, Appendix IV). There aren't any major changes in the pattern of distribution that was described in the preceding paragraphs. Very high concentrations emerge on field blocks 277b and 10, unmasking the small size of the transect collections. Some of the field units for which we suspected on-site densities form better defined clusters (field blocks 125-129, field block 342), while in a few cases the analysis blurred the limits indicated by the unadjusted record of the transect survey (field blocks 336, 289a-290a). Even though the individual transect collections represented over 30% of the material counted, on almost ¾ of the field units, the predicted densities are considerably higher. The lower threshold of the average density zone increases from 2.5 to 7, while the lower threshold of the very high density zone from 11.3 to over 38 fragments per 1000 sq meters. While the difference between the density figures recorded by the regular grid survey and the unadjusted transect collections were often

[389] J.L. Bintliff, P. Howard, A.M. Snodgrass, et al. 19-20, 2007.

tenfold, the adjusted transect collections produce densities that are 2 to 4 times lower than those recorded by the total collections.

The total collections on grid 1 covering an area of nearly 1.5 hectares and including field blocks 38a/b-40a/b, 59, 61a-b were carried out prior to the study of the material collected by the individual field walking transects (maps V_5a-c). These field blocks were selected for a total grid coverage because of the very high overall artifact density, but both the transect and the grid surveys confirmed that the great majority of the finds dated to the last couple of centuries, with a very small percentage of Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman and prehistoric finds (tables 4-5 graph1, Appendix IV). This was the first clear signal that the off-site debris from the last couple of centuries was not only present in considerable quantities in the survey area, but its density also varied considerably from field to field. Nevertheless the small collection of Roman finds comprising less than 15% of the total surface record on this location formed a tiny cluster with on-site densities in the southeast corner of the gridded area (map V_5b). It is defined by artifact densities higher than 6.5 fragments and a maximum of 11.5 fragments per 100 sq meters at the site core. Excluding the site halo, the average density is 8 fragments per 100 sq meters, slightly over twice the district average. This is a compact cluster measuring less than 500 sq meters. It barely emerges from the off-site segment revealed on the rest of the gridded area where artifact densities consistently measure about 0.65 and on certain location rise to over 3 fragments per 100 sq meters.

It is questionable if the small and thin cluster of Roman finds on grid 1 represents a separate establishment or it is a part of the much larger cluster uncovered by grid 2, about 50-60 meters to the south-southeast (maps V_5a-c, tables 4-5, Appendix IV). As explained in Appendix III, the transect survey recorded an increased amount of the overall surface record on the field blocks immediately to the south of grid 1 stretching partly over the same, partly over the lower terrace. Unlike on the field blocks covered by grid 1, the individual transect collections from field block 37 indicated the presence of Roman material, giving a density of nearly 12 fragments per 1000 sq meters. To some degree this was confirmed by the results of the total grid survey, which apart from field block 37 covered partly or entirely field blocks 33-35. This was a many times larger site, with a higher maximum density and a slightly higher on-site threshold. Its limits coincide with a narrow belt with artifact densities ranging between 6.5 and 8.3 fragments per 100 sq meters. On the central portion of the site in the southern half of the gridded area, artifact densities reached to over 20 fragments per 100 sq meters. Thus over ¾ of the site area are located on the lower terraces on field block 34 and only the northern end of the site stretches over to field block 37. This imprecision of the transect survey data has to do with the inconsistent intensity of the collections by individual transects. Once the individual transect collections are adjusted to represent 100% of the material counted, field block 34 joins the zone of higher than average artifact density, though it is still ranked lower than field block 37. On field block 32 covering a segment of the site halo, the density predicted are lower and this unit is shifted to the zone of average artifact density (map V_5c)

Further in the text we will see that in comparison to other Roman sites in this survey area, the cluster on grid 2 is fairly compact. Even so there stretches across the centre of the cluster a narrow strip of intermediary density, nearly splitting the site area into two halves. This contributes to the relatively low average density on this site of only slightly over 8 fragments per 100 sq meters. It must be noted however that this figure doesn't include the discarded fragments, which in the case of grid 2 mostly comprised worn bits of Roman tile. Similar narrow strips of artifact density higher than 8.3 fragments per 100 sq meters cross over to the upper terrace on

field block 37. Including only grid units featuring densities higher than 8.3 fragments per 100 sq meters, the cluster on grid 2 occupies almost 5 500 sq meters.

Turning back to the issue of the relation between the neighbouring clusters on grids 1 and 2, it was thought helpful to analyze the distribution of the Roman material by basic fabric categories (graph 2, Appendix IV). In general as in the Sopot survey, it was easy to make a distinction between fine and coarse fabric groups, the latter often featuring a number of different inclusions in the paste. Apart from cooking, some of these fabric groups could have been used for storage and transport. Compared to the Roman pottery from the Sopot survey, there are a considerable number of coarse fabric groups. It has to be stressed however that because of the character of the local material, the category of fine ware actually consists of plain pottery or pottery where the slip was worn. Truly fine, decorated or glazed pottery was almost completely absent[390]. It is equally possible that a portion of the plain ware was also used for transport and storage, but these were evidently fragments of smaller vessels, possibly serving as smaller jars or table jugs. In this respect, the classifications presented are not comparable to the similar analyses in Greece and the Aegean, where pottery experts can distinguish between table ware, cooking or processing vessels and transport and storage vessels[391]. In principle the analyses of the assemblages from both survey areas distinguish between plain and coarse fabric groups, broad categories that shouldn't be directly related to function. In addition we were able to give more precise estimates about the true quantities of architectural ceramics.

As discussed in the appendix, the two assemblages have a similar composition. In both collections architectural ceramics is the most predominant category, comprising between 60 and 70% of the collections of Roman material. Plain pottery is slightly more numerous on the cluster on grid 2 representing about 20%, while coarse fabrics represent around 13% of the collected material. On the cluster on grid 1 both categories are represented by about 17% of the collections. It is noteworthy that this composition is very similar to the composition of the Roman-Late Roman assemblages from Sopot, especially those from site 5a-b. This relative consistency in the shares of the basic ceramic categories on the clusters on grid 1 and 2 is rather exceptional for the Roman sites in the second survey. The collections from most other neighbouring clusters showed considerable variations.

The fact that the Roman collections from grids 1 and 2 were made up of identical fabrics suggests that the two were most probably contemporary. At the same time, the similar composition of the assemblages from both clusters can be interpreted as a sign that both sites had a similar function and existed independently. However their very close proximity to each other, the incomparably smaller size of the cluster on grid 1 and above all, the fact that this pattern of closely spaced pairs consisting of one small and one many times larger cluster is repeated on a number of other locations in the survey area indicate that the two probably functioned as components of a single establishment. Being ten times smaller and situated only 50 meters away, the cluster on grid 1 could be an outbuilding of the main settlement unit on grid 2. This is further suggested by the fairly extensive zone of intermediary density spreading over most of the area covered by grid 1. It is unlikely that this off-site material was produced by the small cluster on grid 1. This zone of intermediary density must be the halo of the site on grid 2, spreading over a distance of 140 meters to the north of the site. It is nearly certain that similar densities would

[390] On the special value assigned to this pottery class in the Roman World see J. T. Peňa, 20-21, 2007.

[391] J.L. Bintliff, P. Howard, A.M. Snodgrass, tab. 5.3, 2007; T. Whitelaw, 227-243, eds. R. Francovich, H. Patterson, 2000; M. van der Enden, Koroneia 2009: Surface survey sampling experiments, 33-41, J. Bintliff, B. Slapšak, The Leiden-Ljubljana Ancient Cities of Boeotia 2009 seasons, 1-58, *Pharos* 17(2), 2012.

have been revealed was grid 2 extended over the neighbouring fields to the east and west. According to the collections by individual transects, the density of Roman material stays above 5.1 fragments per 1000 sq meters on most of these field units, although the extent of the halo in these directions is limited by the proximity of the neighbouring sites on field blocks 47a-b, 49-50, 66 and on grids 5-11. On field blocks to the east and west of the cluster on grid 2, the site halo spread for not more than 50 meters.

The site on grids 1 and 2 occupies the upper portion of the eastern ridge, the terrace between the contour lines of 510 and 520 meters above sea level. It is located immediately below the summit of the ridge, on the gentler and sunnier western slope. Topographically this micro-location is hardly prominent. It is situated above the most fertile stretches of land in the surveyed basin and has an excellent visual control over the wider surroundings. Like most of the find-spots of prehistoric material, it has an immediate access to the main local road that leads along the summit of the ridge. The small fortification is situated about 350 meters to the north, overlooking the slopes occupied by the site on grids 1 and 2.

About 130 meters to the east-northeast of the edge of the cluster on grid 2, we observed larger quantities of Roman material on field blocks 10 and 11 (grid 3 on map V_5b). This pair of contiguous field units was immediately selected for total grid collections and the transect collections included but a few fragments representing a tiny fraction of the material counted. Assuming that all material counted was included in the transect collections will only partly compensate for this bias, elevating the density on field block 10 above the site threshold (map V_5c). Only after the total collections on grid 3 did we clarified the exact size and location of this site (map V_5b, table 5, Appendix IV). It was confined to a pair of grid units on the southern periphery of the gridded area that featured around 15 and 20 fragments per 100 sq meters. Judging by the apparent traces of secondary dislocations along the eastern edge of the field, originally this site was larger and perhaps slightly denser. It is in any case evident that it didn't occupy an area larger than 300 sq meters. Like the clusters on grids 1 and 2, it is surrounded by a narrow belt of artifact densities ranging between 4 and 6 fragments per 100 sq meters. Excluding this zone from the site area, the cluster on grid 3 has one of the highest average densities in this survey area, but this merely reflects its small size. The total collections from the rest of the units on grid 3 revealed artifact densities ranging between 1 and 4 fragments per 100 sq meters. As argued in Appendix IV this zone coincides with the site halo, which in the case of the cluster on grid 3 cannot be followed outside the gridded area covering field blocks 10 and 11. The neighbouring field blocks to the west were thickly overgrown and Roman finds were nearly absent among the transect collections from the neighbouring fields to the north and south.

Seemingly this cluster is of the same rank as the cluster on grid 1. There are however a few characteristics that set it apart from the rest of the small Roman sites in the second survey. The collection of Roman finds from grid 3 is mostly made up of the same local fabric groups that constitute most other Roman clusters and the composition of the assemblage is very close to the one collected from grid 2 (graph 2, Appendix IV). But the collection from grid 3 is the only one in the second survey that includes a small amount of fine table ware. It consists of about a couple of dozen fragments covered with a high-quality red slip and in one case, a finely executed stamped decoration. Among the material collected one can recognize rim fragments from cups, a ring foot from a dish or a plate and bowl fragments. There is also a small group of tile fragments made in a fabric that doesn't appear on any other location in this survey area. Initially it was thought that these finds could represent a later phase on site 3, but as they are datable to the 4th century AD, there are no firm grounds to chronologically separate them from the rest of the

Roman material[392]. Even if there was a later phase on this site, the character of the collected finds doesn't indicate a full residential site. The local coarse ware and the architectural ceramics typical for the 5th and the 6th century are absent from grid 3, as from the rest of the survey area. The cluster on grid 3 is also the only Roman site on which definite traces of stone masonry were found. These are roughly hewn blocks made from a local stone, very similar to those found along the wall of the small fortification discovered outside the northeast corner of the survey area. Like much of the surface material on site 3, they were found dislocated along the edges of the fields, often inserted into the terrace walls that delimit field blocks 10 and 11 from the north and south.

Unlike the similarly sized cluster on grid 1 and other small clusters revealed by this survey, site 3 stands fairly isolated. The nearest larger sites are located on grids 2 and 5-11, at distances of 120 and 140 meters. Its micro-location is also far more prominent in comparison to the rest of the sites. The site on grid 3 is the only one situated above the contour line of 520 meters above sea level. It stands lower only to the small fortification discovered 450 meters to its northwest, closer to the apex of the surveyed basin. Although there is little evidence to elucidate the chronological relation between the two, it is very possible that they were at least partly contemporary. As discussed in Appendix III, currently the fortified area has been turned into a grove and was left out of the survey area. During the recording of its plan, it became clear that there is very little surface material, but it was also observed that the craftsmanship of the stonework was similar to that discovered on grid 3. These two sites are both situated near the edge of the hypothetical terrace carved by the receding Central Balkan Lake. The site on grid 3 literally sits at the very edge of this terrace, bound at the south by the contour line of 520 meters above the sea. Both sites occupy locations at the summit of the eastern ridge. The crest of this ridge has long since been turned into agricultural fields. The asphalt road linking the village Pobužje with Skopje was cut along a lower line, on the eastern slope of the ridge. But the easiest natural line of communication is the one following the very summit, passing by site 3 and the fortification and leading directly to a point where the roads leading out of Pobužje and Kučevište meet. The clusters on grid 1and 2 occupy a slightly lower ground, between the contour lines of 510 and 520 meters above the sea. They are positioned on a gently sloping but more spacious and also probably, more fertile terrain. The rest of the clusters of Roman material occupy the lower terraces; the closer to the central axis of the basin, the further away from the natural line of communication connecting the plain and the mountain. As in Appendix IV they will be presented by terraces in a descending order.

350 meters west-northwest of the cluster on grid 1, at the southwest foot of the small fortification, the transect survey revealed a small group of 4 contingent field blocks featuring above 5.1 fragments per 1000 sq meters (maps V_6a-c, grid 14). As with the site on grid 3, this concentration of material was discovered at an early stage and it was decided to collect only a small sample of finds by individual transect units from field block 86, where most of the material was obviously concentrated. When the transect collections are adjusted to represent 100% of the material counted, both field blocks 86 and 84a come to prominence with nearly 50 fragments per 1000 sq meters. The total collections on grid 14 confirmed what was anticipated in the course of fieldwork, although the quantity of the gathered finds was lower than expected (tables 6-7, Appendix IV). This site was revealed on the border between field blocks 86 and 84a, most of the site area encompassed by the former unit. The increased density of Roman material on the surrounding fields indicated by the fairly thorough individual transect collections probably marks

[392] The dating of this material was suggested by D-r P. Bes from the CatholicUniversity in Leuven, who kindly accepted to look at some of the photographs.

the extent of the site halo, mostly spreading to the north and west of the site. Its maximum radius measured not more than 70 meters in a northwest direction.

Like the cluster on grids 1-2, this site is located at the southern edge of its impact zone, occupying a lower ground. This is a much smaller site occupying an area of about 600 sq meters and featuring maximum artifact densities of about 15 fragments per 100 sq meters. There are no traces of secondary dislocations and it is possible to observe an almost regular concentric pattern. The site area is compact, limited to 3 or 4 contingent grid units in the centre of the grid. It is surrounded by a narrow belt featuring between 4 and 6.5 fragments per 100 sq meters. The rather low average density on this site is again related to the decision to discard a considerable portion of the material gathered, especially defaced fragments of architectural ceramics (table 7, Appendix IV). In the eastern third of the gridded area, the density of Roman finds never exceeds 2 fragments per 100 sq meters. This confirms the findings of the transect survey according to which the site halo mostly spread to the north and northwest of the site on grid 14.

The composition of the assemblage collected from grid 14 is unlike the assemblages from the sites discussed previously (graph 4, Appendix IV). At least 80% of the collected material was fragments of brick and tile and while coarse ware was represented by slightly over 10% of the collection, plain fabric comprised less than 5%. Almost identically composed assemblages were collected from the first survey area, from sites 13a-b, 14 and 15. In fact clusters predominantly made up of architectural ceramics and coarse ware and pithos fragments in particular are far from unusual when rural sites from the Roman Period are in question. Very similar clusters are known from intensive survey projects in various parts of Greece and Italy[393]. During the analysis of the results from the first survey in chapter IV, we mentioned the possibility that these are special-purpose sites lacking a full domestic assemblage. However one also has to allow for the possibility that this relative scarcity of pottery was chiefly determined by site-specific taphonomic factors. It can be argued that under certain circumstances, the collapsed roofs of buildings can effectively seal off the deposits lying on the floors allowing only a small fraction of the material to enter the surface record[394]. In the paragraphs that follow, we'll see that even on sites with full domestic assemblages there are components predominantly made up of brick and tile.

The cluster on grid 14 is also made distinct by its micro-location. Like the sites on grids 1 and 2, it is situated between the contour lines of 510 and 520 meters above sea level. But unlike the latter it belongs to the central sections of the survey basin, at a considerable distance from the main natural line of communication running along the top of the eastern ridge. To the north, the slopes leading up to the mountainside and the location of the modern villages are relatively steep and uncomfortable for communication. Although lying at the same height as the sites on grids 1 and 2, at this point the summit of the eastern ridge is higher and there is no immediate access to the main local road from site 14. In general sites occupying the central sections of the survey area are more isolated than those standing on the top of the eastern ridge or along its upper portions. Positioned unfavorably in the context of the local road network and lacking visual control over its surroundings, the cluster on grid 14 is surrounded by gentle and spacious fertile stretches. It occupies the southwest foot of the small fortification standing over 20 meters higher. This is the head of the surveyed basin, the point where the small valley begins to take shape.

[393] J.L. Bintliff, P. Howard, A.M. Snodgrass, et al. fig. 5.1, 2007; W. Cavanagh, C. Mee and P. James, et al. 2005; C. Mee, H. Forbes, et al. 1997; T.W. Potter, *The Changing Landscape of South Etruria*, New York 1979.

[394] J. Bintliff et al. 261, 2002.

Recall that because of the relative spaciousness and fertility, we predicted this and similar locations to be one of the main settlement loci in this survey area.

One of the main targets of the regular grid survey on the eastern ridge was a group of field blocks along the eastern limit of the survey. A number of closely spaced field units featured high or very high overall artifact density and in this case, we were lucky that at least on half of them, the Roman material was present in on-site quantities. On the northernmost group of field blocks 1-6, the individual transect collections indicated that the zone of very high density of Roman material was even more extensive than the zone of high overall density (map V_7a-7c, tables 6-7, Appendix IV). Unfortunately at the time of the grid survey on these locations, the transect collections were yet to be analyzed and the badly worn, defaced fragments left an impression that we were dealing with a typical off-site scatter. Although far more numerous, the volume of the collection was so small and unpromising, it was decided to limit the total grid survey to field blocks 2 and 6 and part of field block 1.

Some of the highest on-site densities of Roman material in this survey were recorded by the total collections on grid 11, covering field blocks 1 and 2. It reaches nearly 40 fragments per 100 sq meters and were all finds included in the analysis, it would have surely risen to over 66 fragments per 100 sq meters. Not surprisingly the average on-site density is also very high, reaching nearly 15 fragments per 100 sq meters, even when the discarded finds are excluded from the analysis. The cluster on grid 11 is more compact and considerably larger than the clusters on grids 1, 3 or 14. The revealed portion measures about 2200 sq meters, but given the fact that densities of about 10 fragments per 100 sq meters were recorded on units along the western edge of the grid, it is likely that the site spread further in this direction, over field block 1. An additional row of grid units to the north and west would have probably revealed this site in its entirety.

Only about 30 meters from the northwest edge of the cluster on grid 11, on field block 6, both the transect and the grid collections revealed a larger concentration of Roman material. Although on all field blocks of this group the density of the Roman finds was above the survey's average, there is an apparent increase on field block 6. Artifact densities close to or above the threshold of 8.3 fragments per 100 sq meters were recorded on the northern row of units on grid 5. They spread over an area of 750 sq meters. Regarding size and artifact density, the cluster on grid 5 is slightly larger than the clusters on grids 1, 3 and 14, but it lacks one of the crucial features of on-site clusters (table 7, Appendix IV). The total grid survey revealed that this cluster didn't have a focus or a gradual transition towards the off-site. The density of Roman finds fluctuated at random on the northern row of grid units, suddenly declining to an off-site level in the southern half of the field and probably, outside its limits. As a result there emerged the possibility that the cluster on grid 5 is merely a continuation of the peripheral zone recorded on grid 11, with considerable consequences regarding the size of the cluster on grid 11. This would imply that site 11 stretched over most of field blocks 1-6 occupying an area of 5-6000 sq meters. However the detailed analysis of the transect survey results showed that these are two physically distinct clusters, separated by a zone of average artifact density that spread over field blocks 4 and 5 (map V_7c). To a certain degree this observation was confirmed by the total grid survey, though as it often happened in the Sopot survey we failed to clearly demonstrate it by merging the two grids.

Finally, we should take into account the possibility that the truncated cluster on grid 5 represents the remains of a disturbed site situated on the edge between field block 6 and the neighbouring field unit to the north, 7a. As described in appendices III and IV, field units 5 and 6

are delimited by a very tall escarpment on the north. Faint traces of rubble on the exposed cross-section point to the possibility that the original site was cut and leveled when the escarpment was built. But this possibility hardly changes its rank and relation to the site on grid 11.

Adopting the view that the clusters of Roman pottery revealed on grids 5 and 11 are physically separate, their similarity to the pair of sites discovered on grids 1 and 2 cannot escape notice. In both cases a larger and denser cluster is accompanied by much smaller and thinner satellite, situated less than 70-80 meters from the cores of the larger clusters. On the surface, the pair of clusters on grids 5 and 11 appears as a smaller, but much denser replica. As was shown however, there are certain differences between the two. The maximum artifact density on this site is two to three times the maximum density on grid 2, so far the largest Roman site in the surveyed basin. It remains unclear if this is related to the extreme fragmentation of the surface material on grid 11 or it truly reflects prolonged human occupation. The former seems likelier because even the most numerous collections weighed barely one kilogram. The maximum density of over 66 fragments per 100 sq meters was essentially produced by a hundred tiny and defaced bits of ceramics, in all likelihood fragments of brick and tile. As outside the limits of field blocks 1 and 2, both the quality and the size of the ceramic fragments increase, it was suggested that the increased density on grid 11 should be related to the fine harrowing of these fields. This extremely poor state of preservation was the chief reasons why this site was only partly documented, despite the fact that Roman finds represented over 90% of the total surface record on grid 11 (graph 3, Appendix IV).

Seemingly far more notable is the difference between the fabric compositions of the two assemblages from grids 1-2 and 5-11 (cf. graphs 2 and 4, Appendix IV). In the collections from grid 11, plain fabrics represent well over 30%, while coarse fabrics are represented by less than 10% of the finds. However when the collections from grids 5 and 11 are joined into a single assemblage, its composition is very similar to the composition of the Roman assemblage from the site on grids 1 and 2. Both coarse ware and architectural ceramics figure far more prominently in the collection from grid 5. This spatial differentiation between the basic ceramic categories almost became a rule on all Roman sites in the second survey. But even when the collections from grids 5 and 11 are joined into a single assemblage, the prominence of the plain fabrics on this site cannot be denied. It was the only site in the survey area that produced a fragment of a lamp and there were a considerable number of fragments covered with a poorly preserved slip.

The total grid survey failed to reveal even a small portion of the halo of site 5-11. It is nevertheless certain that it entirely covered field blocks 3-5 and spread over the neighbouring field block 7a to the north, on a higher ground (map 7a-c). Measured from the northern edge of the cluster on grid 11, it extended for over 70 meters. The collections by individual transect collections showed that the site halo also spread to the west, where it reached its maximum extent of over 100 meters and to the south where it is limited by the proximity of the cluster on grid 8. Understandably it is quite possible that the halo also spread to the east of the site area, outside the survey limits.

The sites on grids 1-2 and 5-11 occupy the same type of micro-locations. They are both located on the gently sloping terraces immediately below the crest of the eastern ridge. The characteristics of the location of the site on grids 1 and 2 also apply to the locus of the site on grids 11-5. The latter is situated even closer to the top of the ridge and the main local corridor. Consequently it is less sheltered and despite its lower altitude, it has a good visual control not only over the surveyed basin, but also over the neighbouring basin to the east.

We mentioned that the total grid survey failed to cover all field blocks where the transect survey recorded larger concentrations of Roman material. This is particularly true for the lower terraces of the eastern ridge, where either the presence of the Roman material was realized only after the processing of the finds or it simply proved impossible to locate on-site densities when the fields were revisited for a total collection by regular grids. In these cases the collections by individual transect units present the only record we have. In trying to extract the maximum information from these data, it is important to bear in mind the inherent deficiencies of the transect survey records.

The individual transect collections recorded one of the most extensive zones of very high density of Roman material. It includes field blocks 47a/b, 49-50 and 66, situated only about 70-80 meters to the west and southwest of the larger cluster on grid 2 (maps V_19a-c, table 8, Appendix IV). On two of these field units, 47a and 49, the transect survey recorded artifact densities of nearly 15 fragments per 1000 sq meters. The majority of the field units where the total grid survey recorded site remains featured similar artifact densities and some (such as field block 34) featured even smaller amounts of Roman material. Only fifty meters northeast of this group of field blocks, on field block 66, the transect survey recorded an even greater concentration of Roman material. The overall artifact density on this field was average, but the density of the Roman finds was over 18 fragments per 1000 sq meters. This pattern is further enhanced if we assume that the individual transect collections included 100% of the material counted, with the difference that the concentration on field block 66 now appears thinner and more isolated. This concentration is not very far from the western edge of the site on grid 2, sharing the same terrace. Situated at about 70 meters from the latter, it is possible that it marks the remains of yet another satellite of site 1-2.

Failing to locate and document these clusters using the more intensive grid survey, we can say very little about their exact size, character and location. Likewise one can only guess if they were single clusters, a combination of a larger and a smaller cluster or a series of smaller clusters. We will see that all three combinations were encountered during the grid survey. But judging by the individual transect records, this site certainly consisted of more than one separate cluster (map V_19b). On the southern group of the field blocks (47a-b) the greatest concentration of Roman finds was recorded in the southern half of field block 47a, though in all probability the cluster spread over much of this field block, the site halo spreading over field block 47b. It is also certain that the smaller concentration recorded along the boundary between field blocks 49 and 50, about 60 to 70 meters on the north formed a separate and smaller cluster. As explained before, the status of the very high concentration on field block 66 situated approximately 50 meters to the north-northwest of field block 50 remains uncertain. We are actually more inclined towards viewing it as a satellite of the site on grids 1-2. Predictably it is impossible to decide which of these were the central clusters and which were their satellites. The individual transect collections suggest that the southernmost, the one on field block 47a was slightly larger and denser than the rest.

The transect survey records also roughly point to the extent of the halo surrounding the clusters on field blocks 47a-b, 49-50 and 66 (map V_19a, 19c). If the latter cluster truly belongs to the impact zone of the site on grids 1-2, then the halo of the other two clusters is mostly limited to the field blocks on their south. It extends for over 80 meters measured from the southern limit of field block 47a. Here it borders and possibly intersects with the halo surrounding the site on field blocks 289a-291a, situated at a distance of about 200 meters. To the east the zone of intermediary density extends for almost 70 meters from the edge of field block

47a. The low density on the neighbouring field blocks to the west and north indicates that the halo zone didn't spread symmetrically around the site. Understandably if we interpret the concentration on field block 66 as a component of this site, on the north its impact zone will extend for at least 140 meters measured from the edge of field block 50. In such a case this will become one of the most extensive site halos in this survey area. Although not impossible this conjecture is not very likely. The fact that the remains on these field blocks practically disappeared from the surface record in the latter part of the first year's campaign made us believe that they were small and not very substantial clusters.

Taken together around 65% of the Roman finds collected by individual transects from these fields comprised brick and tile fragments (graphs 5-6, Appendix IV). There is an almost equal percentage of fine/plain and coarse pottery. Excluding the collection from field block 66 wouldn't cause dramatic changes in the composition, though the percentage of architectural ceramics and coarse fabrics will certainly decrease. Looking at the collections from each of these field blocks separately, we observed some striking variations in the presence of the basic ceramic categories. The cluster on field blocks 49-50 was mostly made up of architectural ceramics, with pottery represented by less than 20% of the collected fragments. On the other hand, on field blocks 47a-b pottery comprises over 50% of the finds and plain fabric groups are particularly prominent. Thus as on the site on grids 5-11 the basic categories of ceramic artifacts exhibit divergent patterns of distribution. Apart from the work of certain taphonomic processes, this could reflect an original discard behavior or that the site components were foci of different types of activities.

The site on field blocks 47a-b and 49-50 occupies a location similar to that of site 14. It is situated even lower on the slopes of the eastern ridge, at a considerable distance from the main local road. Measuring from the eastern limit of field block 47a, the crest of the eastern ridge lies at a distance of over 270 meters, while the difference in height between the two points is over 30 meters. In return for this relatively unfavorable positioning concerning proximity to communication and visual control, the site on field blocks 47a-b and 49-50 is in the centre of a spacious and fertile stretch. The surrounding terrain is gentle and space is not limited by escarpments as on the upper portions of the ridge.

Towards the end of the second year's campaign we accidentally discovered another Roman site on field blocks 102a/b-104a/b, by the northern survey limit. As explained in Appendix IV, at the time of the transect survey this group of fields was fallow and both the overall and the density of Roman material were very low (table 9, map V_8a, Appendix IV). However after being ploughed sometime during the second year, there emerged a substantial cluster of Roman material that was accidentally spotted during the total collections on the neighbouring field blocks to the west. This was confirmed by the total survey on grid 27, completely covering all six fields. It revealed a medium-sized cluster occupying an area of almost 1800 sq meters (map V_8b). The site is located in the western half of the grid and consists of two cores separated by a narrow strip where artifact density drops to slightly over 3 fragments per 100 sq meters. It divides the site into a northern, denser and larger core and a smaller component in the southern half of the grid. The maximum artifact density recorded on the northern component is second only to the very dense core on site 5-11. Counting the discarded material, it nearly reaches 30 fragments per 100 sq meters. The southern cluster is considerably thinner and the maximum artifact density barely exceeds 15 fragments per 100 sq meters. Because of the density fluctuations within the site limits, the average on-site density is somewhat lower or almost 9 fragments per 100 sq meters (table 10, Appendix IV). None the less

this is still about 2.5 times the survey average recorded by the grid survey. The fact that this relatively substantial cluster emerged on a location that appeared nearly sterile during the quantification campaign, again stresses the dynamic nature of the surface record in the second survey area. It warns us that even medium-sized clusters could have passed completely unnoticed during the quantifications campaign.

Interestingly while the cluster on grid 27 remained hidden during the first year's campaign, the thin scatter of Roman material spreading over field blocks to its south was recorded by the transect survey (maps V_8a, 8c). This scatter almost certainly represents the halo of site 27, extending over a distance of 60-70 meters measured from the southern edge of the site. The grid survey confirmed that this zone of intermediary density spreads to the east of the site for at least 50 meters, covering the entire eastern half of the gridded area. On field blocks to the north, the collections by individual transect units picked up a sparser off-site carpet. The fact that on one or two field units artifact density approached the mean district value merely reflects the relatively small size of these field units. Immediately to the west of site 27, the regular grid survey revealed an even larger site. It is thus evident that the site halo mostly spread to the east and south of the site area, over a lower ground.

The composition of the assemblage from this site is very similar to the assemblage from the site on grids 1-2 or to the combined collections from field blocks 47a-b and 49-50 (graph 8, Appendix IV). Architectural ceramics represents nearly 60% of the all finds collected, while pottery fragments about 40%. Unlike the assemblage from grids 5-11, coarse ware is slightly more numerous than plain ware. Looking at the on-site distribution of the basic ceramic categories, we see once again a clear spatial differentiation (map V_9). Most of the brick and tile alongside a portion of the coarse fabric groups came from the southern component, while on the northern core plain fabrics were predominant and architectural ceramics comprised a minority in the total collections.

About 60-70 meters to the west of site 27, the transect survey recorded a very high overall density on four closely spaced field units. The collections by transect units revealed that the Late Ottoman-Early Modern Period was the most numerous chronological group in the surface record on this location, although finds datable to the Roman Period also contributed to the high overall density, especially on field blocks 125, 129 and 137 (map V_8a, table 9, Appendix IV). In fact adjusting the transect collections so that they represent 100% of the material counted, there emerges a fairly compact zone of higher than average artifact density, spreading over field blocks 125, 129, 134-137 (map V_8c). Nevertheless until the total collections on grids 15-18 were carried out, we believed that the cluster of Roman material was located further west, on field block 137. The total grid survey proved otherwise (map V_8b). In fact the density of Roman finds was so low on this field, it was decided not to extend grid 18 over its entire area.

The total grid survey discovered three separate clusters; two on field blocks 125, 129 and a third one on the border between field blocks 130 and 136. The southernmost component is the largest. It was located in the western half of field block 125, covered by grid 15. The maximum artifact density of about 30 fragments per 100 sq meters was recorded on 3 neighbouring grid units. The second core is situated about 25-30 meters to the northeast. It was discovered in the eastern half of field block 129, covered by grid 17. As on grid 27, this core is thinner featuring less than 20 fragments per 100 sq meters. It is also much smaller, limited to a single grid unit. Finally, the third and northernmost component is situated about 45 meters to the north-northwest, along the eastern edge of grid 18. Similarly to the central component, it featured about 20

fragments per 100 sq meters, but it is larger spreading over at least three neighbouring grid units. The very low average on-site densities, barely twice the survey average, reflect both the fact that the site cores were limited to very small segments of the gridded areas and that a considerable portion of the discarded finds consisted of worn Roman tile (table 10, Appendix IV). It should be noted that unlike the sites on grids 1-2 or those on field blocks 47a-b and 49-50, the three components of this site are united by a discontinuous zone of on-site density, mostly higher than 6-7 fragments per 100 sq meters. Only rarely does the artifact density drop below the threshold of 8.3 fragments per 100 sq meters within the limits of the site. Including this zone in the site area, the site on grids 15-18 equals the site on grids 1 and 2, measuring approximately 5500 sq meters (map V_10).

As on grid 1, the total collections on grids 16 and 18 covered a considerable portion of the site halo. North of the site area on grid 18, it is possible to clearly follow the transition between the on-site and the off-site. The cluster situated along the eastern edge of this grid is surrounded by a narrow belt with artifact densities ranging between 2.5 and 6 fragments per 100 sq meters. After about 15-20 meters, the artifact density decreases to about 1.5-2 fragments per 100 sq meters and it stays at this level throughout the northern half of the grid. However in the northwest corner of the gridded area there is another increase, possibly indicating the presence of a satellite cluster on field blocks 137 or 140. Including the latter field unit and measuring from the northern component on grid 18, the maximum radius of the northern halo is at least 85 meters. The total collections on grid 16 showed that the western halo is far less extensive, with artifact densities dropping below 2 fragments per 100 sq meters, after 50 meters from the site edge. The transect survey collections suggest that the site halo also extends over the fields east of the site area. This group of field blocks could equally belong to the impact zone of the site on grid 27, but even if it is notionally divided between the two sites, the southern half belonging to the site on grids 15-18, the halo radius will measure over 120 meters in this direction. South of the site area there lacks a continuous carpet of intermediary density, but note the isolated peak on field block 119 featuring nearly 6 fragments per 1000 sq meters. This could very well present the remains of another small satellite, probably situated in the eastern half of the field block.

The composition of the Roman assemblage from grids 15-18 repeats the pattern revealed on grids 5-11 and 27 (graph 8, map V_9). In this case the southern and central component are made up of equal quantities of architectural ceramics and plain pottery, both groups representing about 35% of the collection. However coarse fabrics are likewise present in considerable quantities, comprising about 25% of the finds. The percentage of pottery would probably decrease by a small margin were all finds included in the analysis. But in the case of this site, the "brick and tile component" was evidently on the northern core on grid 18. Here architectural ceramics comprises almost 70% of the total collections, though unlike in the collections from grid 14, both plain and coarse fabrics are present in considerable numbers.

The sites on grids 15-18 and 27 occupy the head of the surveyed basin. They are situated immediately below the contour line of 500 meters above the sea. The surrounding terrain is gentler and far more spacious than on the upper portions of the eastern ridge. Although there is no running water on the surface, the high water-table allows the cultivation of garden cultures and fruits. The basin's floor probably has the most fertile soils in the survey area. It was therefore surprising to discover the faint remains of prehistoric settlement on the eastern ridge and not on the floor of the basin. Regarding proximity to natural lines of communication and visual control over the surroundings, the locations of both sites are less favorable than the locations of their neighbours on the eastern ridge. The lower portions of the basin are still within

sight, but it is impossible to see beyond the summits of the ridges. Presently the Skopje-Kučevište asphalt road passes only about 150 meters west of the site on grids 15-18. However this modern road is far from following the easiest natural line of communication. It climbs the relatively steep slopes of the western ridge avoiding the even steeper, northern side of the surveyed basin. As explained in the chapter describing the survey area and the broader region of Skopian Montenegro, all major local and regional roads follow the summits of the ridges rather than the narrow valley floors.

At this same altitude but south of the site on grids 5-11 on the eastern ridge, the transect survey revealed an extensive zone of higher overall density spreading for nearly 200 meters along the upper portions of the ridge. As a total coverage of this entire zone would have been impractical, we aimed at covering only those field blocks with very high overall density. However the study of the individual transect collections showed that this increment in the overall artifact density was largely contributed by the off-site debris from the last couple of centuries, especially on field blocks in the eastern half of this zone. Roman material was also present, especially on field blocks in the western half, on the other side of the dirt road that connects the fields in this area with the Skopje-Pobužje asphalt road. On certain field blocks, such as field block 328b, we simply couldn't locate any material from the Roman Period despite the fact that these finds were present among the individual transect collections (maps V_11a – 11c, tables 11-12, Appendix IV).

The northern half of this group of field blocks was covered by grids 8 and 4 (map V_11b). On grid 4 we revealed a larger off-site segment, similar to those recorded on grids 1 and 18. On-site densities were recorded on grid 8, covering the narrow fields on the other side of the dirt road. We believe that the grid survey revealed only a portion of this site or rather, on of its components. It was discovered on the boundary between field blocks 22a and 22b, with an evident focus on a single unit from the northern row. On this core the regular grid survey recorded almost 20 fragments per 100 sq meters, including the discarded material. On the surrounding grid units the density of Roman material suddenly drops to about 6.5 fragments per 100 sq meters, marking the edge of the site. The revealed portion of this site measures about 750 sq meters and features an average density of 9 fragments per 100 sq meters or about 2.5 times the survey average. According to the collections by individual transect units there was a similarly sized core on the neighbouring field to the north (map V_11c). It was probably situated in the northern half of field block 23a, at a distance of only 20 meters from the core on grid 8. Thus in all likelihood we are encountering a similar situation to those revealed on grids 15-18 or on field blocks 47a-b, 49-50. Naturally in the case of the site on grid 8, it remains unclear if on-site densities spread across both field blocks 22a-b and 23a-b. If the situation on field block 23a-b is comparable to that revealed on its southern neighbour, it is likely that the on-site density was limited to a smaller area and that these were two separate clusters.

Analyzing the composition of the collected material from grid 8, we observed a nearly identical cluster to the one on grid 14 (graph 10, Appendix IV). It is predominantly made up of architectural ceramics, fragments of brick and tile made almost exclusively in one fabric. They constitute over 80%, while pottery fragments not more than 15% of the collections. As on grid 14, coarse pottery is more numerous than plain fabrics. In the case of the assemblage from grid 8, coarse ware is almost twice as numerous as the plain fabrics. Given the possibility that this site had another component on field block 23a, it was decided to separately analyze the transect collections from this and other field blocks surrounding the site. On all field units belonging to this group, except for field block 25a situated between 50 and 70 meters from the core on grid 8,

the ratio of tile to pottery was 4 to 1, identical to their ratio in the total collections. Thus even if the site extended on the neighbouring terrace to the north, it is unlikely that the composition of the assemblage would have changed dramatically.

Initially the scarcity of pottery on this site was related to the possibility that this was a non-residential site, but this view wasn't supported by the fairly large extent of the site halo (map V_11a, 11c). If the site on grid 8 was truly a non-residential site one would expect to reveal only a very narrow belt of intermediary density, spreading for not more than a few dozen meters from the site edge. But in the case of site 8, after this narrow intermediary zone marking the site periphery there spreads an extensive area with artifact density ranging between 0.65 and 1.6 fragments per 100 sq meters. This segment of the off-site was captured by the total survey on grid 4. With slight declines and peaks, it stretches for a maximum of 90 meters measured from the eastern edge of the site. The fact that it partly intersects with the halo of its southern neighbour on grids 6-7 doesn't reduce its extent. That the site halo spreads in almost all directions from the site area is documented by the transect survey collections. It mostly spread on the field blocks to the west of the site, where the maximum halo radius was measured at about 80 meters from the site edge. To the north and south, the site on grid 8 is sandwiched between the sites on grid 5-11 and 6-7. The transect survey revealed densities higher than the district average on most of the intervening field units, but it is certain that these field blocks at least partly belong to the impact zone of the neighbouring sites. Hence it appears that the halo of site 8 mostly extends to the east and west of the site area, along the same terrace occupied by the site.

Only about 60 meters south of the site on grid 8, the transect collections indicated very high density of Roman material on field block 320 (maps V_11a, 11c, tables 12-13, Appendix IV). Indeed when the transect collections are adjusted to represent 100% of the material counted, field block 320 becomes the unit with the highest density of Roman material in the second survey or over 118 fragments per 1000 sq meters. This field block also ranked very high by the overall artifact density, which was equally contributed by the material datable to the Late Ottoman-Early Modern and the Roman Period. The total survey on grid 6 documented almost the entire site area. This was a compact cluster featuring a typical concentric pattern of distribution. Artifact density gradually declines in all directions from the site core, occupying the centre of the gridded area. As usual the maximum density was limited to a single grid unit, featuring almost 23 fragments per 100 sq meters. On grid units along the site periphery, artifact density sharply decreases to between 3-4 fragments per 100 sq meters. A small portion of the site probably extended beyond the western limit of the grid, on field block 321. Allowing for wider margins along the western edge, the site on grid 6 is only slightly larger than its neighbour on grid 8, occupying not more than 800 sq meters.

According to the composition of the material collected, the site on grid 6 is nearly identical to the clusters on grid 11 or on grids 15 and 17 (graph 10, Appendix IV). In the case of site 6 architectural ceramics are still the most prevalent group representing 45% of the collections, but plain pottery is only slightly less numerous with nearly 40% of all Roman finds on this grid. As on grid 11 coarse pottery is very scarce, comprising less than 10% of the collection. Concerning their composition, the assemblages collected from grids 6 and 8 are "complementary", perhaps indicating that these two clusters were components of the same site. Admittedly the distance between the two is slightly larger than on the rest of the sites and they are separated by a wider stretch of average artifact density. Similar distances were measured between the clusters on grids 1-2 and 5-11, but in these examples, one of the clusters was many times smaller. The clusters on grids 6 and 8 on the other hand were of a roughly equal size. Even

if we allow that the site on grid 8 spread further north, it wouldn't have been much larger than its neighbour on grid 6.

Further confusing the interpretation, the total survey on grid 7 covering field blocks on the eastern side of the dirt road revealed an even smaller cluster, situated only about 25 meters from the eastern edge of site 6 (mapV_11b, table 12, Appendix IV). This was a tiny site, with artifact densities above the site threshold limited to three grid units. We believe that this circumstance explains why it went unnoticed during the transect survey; even the corrected transect collections don't reveal on-site densities on the field blocks covered by grid 7 (maps V_11a, 11c, table 13, Appendix IV). As two of these units barely featured 6.5 fragments per 100 sq meters, it is likely that the site area didn't exceed 400 sq meters. Interestingly the maximum density was slightly higher than on grid 6, featuring about 25 fragments per 100 sq meters. It is highly probable that a similarly sized cluster elevated the artifact density on the neighbouring field to the east, on field block 328b. On this field unit the collections by individual transects recorded over 20 fragments per 1000 sq meters, well above the threshold of 11.3, but upon return we discovered the field nearly sterile and it wasn't included in the gridded area.

The cluster on grid 7 was like its neighbour on grid 6 predominantly made up of pottery fragments (graph 10, map V_12, Appendix IV). Brick and tile comprised only slightly over 30% of the total collections. Representing nearly 45% of the assemblage, plain pottery is by far the most numerous group, although there are considerable quantities of coarse fabrics. It is noteworthy that in comparison to the material from grid 6, these finds were rather poorly preserved. In this aspect, they resemble the material collected from grids 11, 15 and 17. It is possible that the fairly high maximum density on grid 7 was merely reflecting the extreme fragmentation of the material.

Regarding their very close proximity to each other, it is likely that the clusters on grids 6 and 7 were the two components of the same site. What remains uncertain is the status of the cluster on grid 8 and its relation to the latter pair of sites. Judging by the composition of the Roman collection from this grid, it would have neatly complemented the "pottery-based components" on grids 6 and 7. We saw a very similar pattern on a number of other sites in this survey area. The problem with this group arises from the considerable dispersion of the three clusters. The small cluster on grid 7 is almost 100 meters away from the site on grid 8. In most other examples the various components formed more compact groups, the distance between neighboring components rarely exceeding 50 meters and the intervening stretches often featuring densities higher than the threshold of 6.5 fragments per 100 sq meters.

If for the moment we adopt the view that the clusters on grids 6 and 7 formed a single site that existed independently of the cluster on grid 8, the extent of its site halo is considerably limited by the proximity of the neighbouring sites. It certainly extended for between 75 and 85 meters to the north, across the field units covered by grid 4. In this direction it overlapped with the halo emanating from the site on grid 8. The extent of this zone to the east of the site is unclear, because of the problematic status of the concentration on field block 328b. If this was another component of the same site, the maximum halo radius will measure about 110 meters from the eastern edge of the cluster on grid 6 or 75 meters from the cluster on grid 7. But this field unit is situated by the eastern survey limit and it is possible that it is a component of yet another site, situated outside the survey area. The zone of intermediary density also spreads to the south of the cluster on grid 7, but in this direction it is evident that it intersected with the halo of the larger site on grid 10. The transect survey recorded artifact density close to or slightly above the district average on the field blocks to the west of the cluster on grid 6, but here too, its

halo zone probably overlapped with the halos of the sites on grids 8 and 10. Dividing this zone into two equal halves and assuming that the halo of site 10 spread exclusively to the south, the maximum radius of the western halo was about 55 meters long, measured from the western edge of the cluster on grid 6.

Understandably if the clusters on grids 6-8 are joined into a single site, the extent of the halo zone will grow considerably. In such a case however there emerges another problem. As with the clusters on field blocks 47a-b, 49 and 50, it is impossible to decide which of the three components was the centre of this group. Measuring from the centrally positioned cluster on grid 6, the halo radius will extend for over 120 meters to the north, bordering with the halo of site 5-11. To the west, measured from the edge of the cluster on grid 6, the maximum halo radius will extend for nearly 160 meters, making it one of the most extensive site halos in the second survey. Given the fact that the combined areas of the three clusters barely exceed 2000 sq meters, it is unlikely that their halo was more extensive than the halos of the sites on grids 1-2 or 15-18. Recall that these two sites were more than two times larger. Predictably taking the cluster on grid 8 as the centre of this group will extend the halo radius even further. Its maximum extent in a southeast direction measured from the edge of the cluster on grid 8 will reach almost 200 meters. Mainly because of the extensive zone of intermediary density surrounding the cluster on grid 8, we maintain the view that this was a separate residential site.

These three clusters of Roman material, each presenting a differently composed assemblage are situated around the contour line of 490 meters above sea level. They occupy slightly lower ground than the cluster on grids 15-18, but essentially sit on the same terrace. Naturally the sites uncovered on grids 6-8 are much closer to the crest of the eastern ridge, lying at a distance of only 120 to 140 meters. Their locations are analogous to the locations occupied by the Roman sites on grids 1 and 2, 5 and 11. These are the upper terraces of the eastern ridge, gently sloping in a southwest direction. In fact looking more carefully at the topographic map, one notes that this group of sites is located on the top of a low off-shoot of the eastern ridge, enclosing the surveyed basin from the southeast. It seems as if the low depression in the central part of the eastern ridge was deliberately avoided, although we saw that there are Roman sites in this section that the total grid survey failed to locate. As explained earlier the advantage of the upper portions of the ridges as settlement locations mainly lies in their proximity to the natural lines of communication. The tendency to occupy the upper portions of the basin could have also been guided by the desire to occupy less of the most fertile fields in the surroundings[395].

As explained in appendices III and IV, the zone of high overall density extends for a short distance to the south along the low off-shoot of the eastern ridge and then continues for over 400 meters in a westward direction, across the slopes of the eastern ridge. After the study of the individual transect collections, it became clear that much of the material from this part of the survey area consisted of Late Ottoman-Early Modern off-site debris, although on a number of field units there were evident concentrations of Roman material. It has to be stressed that even on these field units, the artifact density recorded by the transect survey barely exceeded the thresholds of 11.3 fragments per 1000 sq meters or 38 fragments per 1000 for the adjusted transect collections (tables 14-16, Appendix IV). Unfortunately there wasn't much overlap between the layers of the Late Ottoman-Early Modern and the Roman material and the total grid survey included only a portion of the field units featuring higher densities of Roman material (cf. maps V_13a/13c and 13b).

[395] Cf. R. Shiel, A. Stewart, 95-109, J. Bintliff, P. Howard, A. Snodgrass et al, 2007.

In fact definitive traces of Roman occupation were only discovered on field blocks 332 and 333a covered by grid 10 (table 15, Appendix IV, map V_13b). On these fields the total collections by regular grids revealed a substantial and a fairly compact cluster. The core of the site with maximum artifact densities of over 30 fragments per 100 sq meters was located in the western half of field block 333a. It is limited to a single grid unit. On the rest of the site area, we recorded lower artifact densities. A thinner carpet of Roman material featuring about 10 fragments per 100 sq meters extends for about 60 meters from the site core, mostly on its west over field block 333a. On the opposite eastern side, the density of Roman material sharply decreases to less than 7 fragments per 100 sq meters. The eastern edge of the site was probably left out of the gridded area. The cluster on grid 10 measures about 2000 sq meters. It has a pronouncedly elongated shape and unusually for its size, it is very compact with average artifact densities of nearly 10 fragments per 100 sq meters.

The total survey on grid 9 located immediately to the west of grid 10 confirmed the western extent of this site (map V_13b). At a distance of 40 meters from the site's western edge, the Roman material almost completely disappears from the surface record (graph 11, Appendix IV). As the cluster on grid 6 is situated only about 50 meters to the north of the edge of site 10, it is evident that the site halo spread mostly to the east and south of the site area. According to the individual transect collections there is a wider zone of intermediary density covering the lower terraces, south of the site. It extends for over 250 meters along the longer west-east axis, but measured from the southern edge of the site area, the maximum halo radius is about 80 meters long. As on a number of other medium or large-sized sites in this survey area, there is at least one possible satellite cluster situated towards the edge of the halo zone. In this case, its presence is probably indicated by the elevated density on field block 342 situated about 50 meters to the south of the site limit. However when the individual transect collections are adjusted to represent 100% of the material counted, we see a considerable increase on all field units covering the terrace to the south of site 10, while field block 342 is shifted to the rank of very high artifact density, characteristic for field blocks covering genuine site areas (map V_13c). It is thus quite probable that we are dealing with another small to medium-sized residential site on this field unit, tying onto the chain of sites on grids 6-8 and 10. In such a case, the southern halo of site 10 is less extensive, probably limited to the first pair of field units to the south. The eastern halo of this site is larger, including a possible satellite on its periphery, on field block 336, at a distance of over 100 meters from the eastern edge of site 10 (maps V_13a, 13c). Here the collections by individual transect units recorded densities close to the site threshold, though lower than on field blocks 320 or 342. Like the concentration on field block 328b, this possible cluster is situated near the survey's eastern limit and at a considerable distance from the site on grid 10. Therefore one cannot exclude the possibility that it gravitated towards an unknown site outside the survey's eastern limit. But in view of the low artifact density recorded on the intervening stretch between field blocks 336 and the eastern survey limit, this isn't a very likely interpretation. We believe that the concentration on field block 336 is a satellite of the site on grid 10. Thus the halo of this site reaches its maximum radius in an eastern direction, measuring almost 130 meters from the edge of the site area. Like its northern neighbours on grids 6-8, the greater portion of the site halo is spread over the same terrace occupied by the site.

Concerning the presence and the distribution of the basic categories of ceramic finds, the collection from grid 10 is similar to the majority of on-site collections in the second survey (graph 12, Appendix IV). Nevertheless there are slight variations and in more specific terms, the collection from grid 10 stands in-between the collections from grids 1-2 or 27 and those from

grids 6, 7 or 15. Architectural ceramics is the predominant category, but it barely represents 50% of the assemblage including the discarded material. Typically for the majority of the sites along the upper portions of the ridge, plain pottery comprises over 30% of the material, but coarse fabrics are also well represented by nearly 20% of the finds collected. As on most of its neighbours, the pottery and the architectural ceramics exhibit divergent patterns of distribution. In the case of site 10, the "brick and tile component" was situated in the western half of the grid, while most of the plain pottery came from the eastern half and specifically from the site core (map V_12).

The cluster on grid 10 is part of the chain of Roman sites occupying the low off-shoot of the eastern ridge that marks the southeast limit of the survey area. These are the small clusters uncovered on grids 6-8. The cluster on grid 10 occupies a slightly lower terrace, but this is essentially the same micro-location. The contour line of 480 meters above sea level marks the southern limit of the site area. This location still offers a good visual control over the lower portions of the basin and easy communication with the fields and the main local road on the crest of the eastern ridge. Going towards the central axis of the basin, it is evident that Roman sites become scarcer, at least along the central and southern sections of the survey area.

Further west along the contour lines of 470 and 480 meters above the sea, the total grid surveys didn't reveal definite traces of Roman sites. Targeting the field blocks that featured very high overall artifact density, the total survey on grids 12 and 13 missed the major concentration of Roman material in this part of the survey area (maps V_13b, 13d). After the study of the collections by individual transect units, it became evident that larger quantities of Roman material were to be found on field blocks 289a-291a, immediately north of grid 12. Field blocks 289a and 290a situated almost 300 meters west-northwest of the cluster on grid 10 and 190 meters south of the site on field blocks 47a-b and 49-50, both featured slightly over 12 fragments per 1000 sq meters (maps V_13a, 13d, 20a, table 17, Appendix IV). This cluster almost certainly spreads further north and west over parts of field block 291a and 303b, where the collections by transect units were less thorough. Analyzing the distribution of the Roman material by individual transect collections, it becomes evident that the cluster consists of at least two, possibly three separate components. One is located in the northern half of field block 289a and possibly spreading over field block 303b, with a second smaller cluster in the northern half of the neighbouring field block 290a, about 30 meters to the north. If there truly was a third northernmost component, it was probably located in the central part of field block 291a, approximately 25 meters to the northeast of field block 290a.

As on its northern neighbour on field blocks 47a-b and 49-50, the collections from each of the components present a differently composed assemblage (graph 14, Appendix IV). The percentage of brick and tile gradually decreases from nearly 80% in the collections from field block 289a, to less than 50% on field block 291a. Apparently the "brick and tile component" was located in the southern half of the site area. The category of plain fabrics exhibits a nearly inverse distribution. It is virtually absent on the southern component on field block 289a, its share increasing to 10% on field block 290a in the centre of the site area and to over 20% on the northernmost component. The percentage of coarse ware is much more stable, barely increasing from less than 20% on field block 289a to 23% of the collections from field block 291a. Taken together, the collections from these three field blocks constitute an assemblage not much different than those collected from the majority of the Roman sites in this survey area. The only point of significant difference is the ratio of coarse to plain pottery. In the case of the elusive site on field blocks 289a-290a, coarse fabrics are more than twice as numerous as the plain fabric

groups. On most other sites of the Roman Period in the second survey plain pottery was predominant, often comprising over 30% of the collections.

The presence of a full residential site on field blocks 289a-291a explains the slightly ambiguous results of the total survey on grids 12 and 13. These two grids were located within or just outside the limits of the site halo and the average artifact densities never exceeded the limit of 1 fragment per 100 sq meters (table 15, Appendix IV). The small but sudden increase in the density of Roman material on grid 12 has to be related to the halo zone generated by the site on field blocks 289a-291a. Grid 12 is located less than 20 meters to the south of the site and partly covers the 70-80 meters wide carpet of intermediary density, possibly stretching for over 110 meters to the south of field block 289a (maps V_13d and 20b). The collections by individual transect units indicate a possible satellite cluster on field block 284, immediately to the south of grid 12. East of the site area, it seems that the site halo is limited to the neighbouring pair of field blocks 294 and 303b, where the transect survey recorded artifact densities only slightly higher than the sector's average. But when the transect collections are adjusted to represent 100% of the material counted, there emerges a more extensive zone of average and higher than average artifact density. It spreads over field blocks 294, 295, 295' and 296, but not beyond the eastern limit of field block 303b. This is also confirmed by the results of the total survey on grid 13, 40-50 meters southeast of field block 289a. Here Roman material was absent on all but a single unit in the centre of the gridded area. We believe that similarly sized, satellite clusters produced the increased artifact density on field block 284, situated 70 to 80 meters to the south of the site area. Note that these tiny clusters are always located at the edge of the halo zone. Further to the south and east there spreads a larger zone of low artifact density. Although the artifact densities on these satellites don't exceed the site threshold, the increase from the neighbouring units is considerable. This is most clearly illustrated on grid 13, where all of the sudden, the density of Roman material increases to 6.5 fragments per 100 sq meters, nearly reaching on-site densities. Was this increment a part of a wider zone of intermediary or low artifact density, it would have been interpreted as an anomalous fluctuation in the off-site record. But in this particular case, the virtual absence of Roman finds on the surrounding grid units points to the possibility that this is a special purpose site located outside the zone of intense manure. This seems to be a plausible interpretation, especially in the light of similar phenomena observed in the hinterland of Thespiai and elsewhere in Boeotia[396]. However one needs to be cautious when interpreting this scanty evidence, for the collections from grid 13 remains an isolated example. In addition pottery from Roman necropoleis doesn't exhibit features that distinguish it from the material found on settlement sites[397].

Given that this reading of the transect survey record is correct, the site on field blocks 289a-291a has a fairly extensive halo, stretching for about 80 meters to the south and over 100 meters to the east of the site area. According to the individual transect collections, north of the site area, on the terraces above the site, the halo of this site was only slightly more contracted (maps V_13d, 20b). In this direction there is a continuous carpet of average density of Roman material stretching between the sites on field blocks 289a-291a and 47a-b, 49-50. Assuming that these two neighbouring sites were of equal rank, the maximum halo radius was not longer than 90 meters, measured from the northern edge of field block 291a. The transect survey clearly demonstrates that the halo zone didn't spread to the west of the site area or was limited to a very narrow belt along the site periphery.

[396] J.L. Bintliff, P. Howard, A.M. Snodgrass et al. 2007, LSE4, THS1, THS11.
[397] J. Bintliff, 44-52, eds. F. Vermeulen, G-J. Burgers, S. Keay, C. Corsi, 2012.

Judging by the considerable extent of the halo zone, the concentration of Roman material on field blocks 289a-291a signals the presence of at least a medium-sized cluster. It occupies the foot of the eastern ridge and it is closer to the Skopje-Kučevište asphalt road than to the summit of the eastern ridge. Concerning proximity to the local road network and visual control over the surroundings, it is in a less favorable position than its northern neighbour on field blocks 47a-b, 49-50 or the sites on grids 15-18 and 27. We'll repeat that the only advantages of this type of locations are the absence of physical barriers and the immediate access to fertile soils.

Roman finds were completely absent among the transect collections from field block 263 (maps V_14a, 14c, table 18, Appendix IV). The very high overall density on this field unit can wholly be attributed to the sudden increase in the amount of the Late Ottoman-Early Modern material. However the total survey on grid 19 covering field block 263 in its entirety yielded a small collection of badly worn fragments datable to the Roman Period (map V_14b, table 19, Appendix IV). After the processing of the finds it became clear that this was a slightly larger collection with a maximum density of 8.3 fragments per 100 sq meters. Recall that similar artifact densities were recorded on the periphery of site areas. Moreover this small cluster exhibited a perfectly concentric pattern, typically seen on small compact sites, such as those on grids 1 or 7. As discussed in Appendix IV this small collection wasn't assigned an on-site status, because of the relatively low artifact density and the extreme fragmentation of the collected finds. The average density on this grid is well below the survey average and equals the density recorded on grid 12. In this context, one wonders if the increased artifact density on this field isn't a direct result of the poor state of preservation of the material. But relegating the collection from grid 19 to an off-site level doesn't entirely solve the problem of its sudden appearance in this survey section. Even if we agree that this was a part of the off-site carpet, it is strange that there are no major sites in its vicinity. The nearest known sites are situated at distances of almost 300 meters. As we saw densities higher than 2-3 fragments per 100 sq meters were normally recorded in the halo zone, close to residential sites.

The last Roman site in the central survey section was discovered during the transect survey on field block 277b (map V_14a, table 18, Appendix IV). Being immediately recognized as a discrete site, the collections by individual field walking transects were less intensive, but we were able to locate and record the full extent of this site during the regular grid survey. Once the individual transect collections are adjusted to represent 100% of the material counted, this bias is unmasked and field block 277b joins the zone of higher than average artifact density (map V_14c). Similar or even higher densities are predicted for field blocks 270a-271, about 370 meters to the north and for field block 394, situated about 30 meters to the south. Because these field units are surrounded by extensive stretches of low artifact density (i.e. there lack traces of the site halos), we believe that these are small concentrations, possibly representing non-residential remains. In terms of size and character they are probably comparable to the site revealed on grid 20.

This site was located in the southwest corner of field block 277b, partly spreading to the north over the neighbouring field block 276b (map V_14b). According to the total survey on grid 20 this was one of the smallest, but at the same time one of the densest clusters of Roman material in the second survey (table 19, Appendix IV). Including the discarded finds, the grid survey recorded a maximum density of nearly 80 fragments per 100 sq meters in the southwest corner of the grid. Including this material, the average on-site density could increase to over 20 fragments per 100 sq meters. Outside the site core to the north and east, the density of Roman finds sharply decreases to an off-site level. On the eastern side the decrease is slightly gentler

and it is possible that the site area extended slightly beyond the grid limit. It is also possible that parts of the site remain hidden beneath the field hedges or the Skopje-Kučevište road. But in all likelihood the actual site area wasn't much larger than the portion revealed by the grid survey, measuring roughly 600 sq meters.

Regarding the composition of the collected finds, the cluster on grid 20 belongs to the group of clusters predominantly made up of brick and tile (graph 16, Appendix IV). This category comprises over 90% of the assemblage, while plain pottery is only slightly more numerous than coarse ware. In the case of this site, the predominance of architectural ceramics is even more pronounced than on the sites on grids 8 or 14. Predictably because of the small size and fairly compact character of the site area, there are no obvious divergences in the distribution of tile and pottery (map V_15).

The cluster on grid 20 along with the one on grid 3 and the hypothetical clusters on field blocks 270a-271 and 394 were the only Roman sites in this survey area that weren't surrounded by a more extensive zone of intermediary artifact density. The collections by transect units on the surrounding field blocks included at least 40% of the material counted, but except for one field unit the density of Roman material never exceeded 2.5 fragments per 1000 sq meters. This sudden decrease is also indicated by the results of the regular grid survey. Artifact density drops below 1 fragment per 100 sq meters on the northernmost grid unit, a bare 30 meters from the site core. It has to be pointed out though that grid 20 failed to cover the very edge of the site area on the eastern side. The existence of a more extensive halo to the south of the site shouldn't be excluded, although this is not indicated by the individual transect collections.

The cluster of Roman finds on grid 20 occupies the lowest location among the Roman sites in the survey area. It is situated just below the contour line of 460 meters above the sea, in the central part of the surveyed basin. At this altitude the small stream begins to take shape and the first longer waterlogged stretches appear. Like the clusters uncovered on grids 15-18 or 27, the site on grid 20 has access to the most fertile portion of the basin. At present most of this zone is under gardens and orchards. Understandably there is no visual communication with the upper slopes and the crests of the ridges. The gentle relief of the survey area makes this distinction less significant, but it is still much more difficult to travel across the slopes than to follow the crests of the ridges. This feature of the studied landscape is presently obscured by the Skopje-Kučevište asphalt road following the central axis of the basin. Observed in relation to the rest of the clusters of Roman material, the site on grid 20 is truly one of the most isolated. The nearest possible Roman site with a residential character is situated 300 meters to the northeast, on field blocks 289a-291a north of grid 12. The next clusters in terms of proximity are the one on grids 15-18, 600 meters to the north and the cluster on grid 26, about 500 meters to the east by the southeast boundary of the survey area. In comparison, the rest of the Roman clusters had their nearest neighbours at distances not greater than 150-200 meters.

The southernmost of the series of sites that occupy the eastern ridge or rather its low off-shoot was discovered on field blocks 348 and 351 by the eastern survey limit, 150 meters to the south of grid 10. Because of the low obtrusiveness of the material and the relatively low artifact density, this cluster came to light only after the processing of the transect collections (maps V_16a, 16c, table 20, Appendix IV). The scarcity of the material datable to the last two centuries also contributed to the somewhat lower overall densities. We nevertheless managed to include field blocks 348 and 351 in the total grid survey, just before the end of the second year's campaign. Grid 26 covered most of the site area, although the southern and western peripheries of the site remained outside the gridded area (map V_16b). On the east, Roman material

disappeared from the surface record on the fields on the other side of the dirt road and beyond the eastern survey limit. The total grid survey showed that on this side too, on-site densities extended slightly beyond the survey area. Artifact densities are relatively low, typical for the small satellite clusters. The average on-site density is fairly modest, with slightly over 7 fragments per 100 sq meters, though the true density is probably over 10 fragments per 100 sq meters (table 19, Appendix IV) Across the site area, artifact densities range from 10 and 15 fragments per 100 sq meters in the centre of the grid, to between 5.5 and 10 fragments per 100 sq meters on the peripheral units south and west of the core. It is therefore unlikely that the site spread for a very long distance beyond the grid limits. Allowing for wider margins along the southern and the western sides and excluding the possible eastern margin, the site on grid 26 measures almost 2200 sq meters. On the northern row of grid units artifact density drops below 3 fragments per 100 sq meters, clearly marking the site limit on this side. It also indicates that the site halo didn't spread to the north of the site area. This was confirmed by the individual transect collections on the field blocks to the north of the site. A 30 to 40 meters wide belt of low artifact density separates the halo of site 26 from that of site 10.

Typically for most on-site collections from the southern half of the eastern ridge, pottery is more numerous than architectural ceramics. However if the discarded material is included in the analysis, brick and tile will represent nearly 55% of the collections, while the share of plain pottery will drop to about 30% (graph 16, Appendix IV). Coarse fabric groups are represented by about 20% of the finds and 15% when all material is included. This is nearly identical to the composition of the assemblage from the neighbouring site on grid 10. Despite the fact that a considerable portion of the site area was revealed, there is no spatial differentiation between the basic categories of ceramic artifacts (map V_17).

As already explained, the cluster of Roman finds uncovered on grid 26 is the southernmost of the chain that covers the low off-shoot of the eastern ridge. It begins with the group of sites uncovered on grids 6-8, approximately 300 meters northeast of grid 26. They all occupy very similar locations to those of the sites uncovered on grids 1-3, 5 and 11, the latter group being situated on the upper slopes or on the very top of the eastern ridge. Although positioned at only a slightly higher altitude than the cluster on grid 20, the Roman site on grid 26 has a much better visual control over the lower sections of the basin and offers a much easier access to the main local roads.

According to the individual transect collections, the halo of the site on grid 26 spread mostly to the south and west of the site area (maps V_16a and 16c, table 20, Appendix IV). As these are rather low densities, one cannot be sure if this zone spread east of the site, beyond the survey limits. We saw in the preceding paragraphs that the halo zones rarely spread on more than two sides of the site areas. The halo of site 26 is especially extensive on field blocks west of the site and on the same terrace delimited by the lines of 460 and 470 meters above sea level. Measured from the southwest corner of the site, the maximum halo radius reaches almost 160 meters, extending to the western edge of field block 357. In fact the zone of between 2.5 and 5.1 fragments per 1000 sq meters patchily extends for hundreds of meters further west and on field blocks 314-315, artifact density increases to over 8 fragments per 1000 sq meters.

It seems unlikely that this entire zone, spreading over an area of several hectares belongs to the halo of site 26 or to its neighbour on grid 10. Because of the observed disproportion between the areas of the sites and their halos, we suspect that there exists another residential site on the fields south of grid 10 and west of grid 26. The adjusted record of the transect collections points to field block 342 as a likely site location (map V_16c). The density predicted for this

field block exceeds 40 fragments per 1000 sq meters, while on all neighbouring field blocks it ranges between 7 and 15 fragments per 1000 sq meters. Thus we have the recognizable concentric pattern of one or two contingent field units with very high artifact density, surrounded by a more extensive zone of intermediary density. This same pattern is visible in the record of the unadjusted transect collections, but now the picture is crystallized and we see a definite concentration on field block 342. The location of this hypothetical site is a near replica of its neighbour on grid 10. It occupies a lower terrace on the eastern ridge and it is connected with the local road-network via the summit of the low ridge that delimits the survey area from the southeast. Even the dispersal of its halo imitate the halo of site 10, chiefly extending to the east and south of the site area.

One can only speculate about the size of the area occupied by this site. None the less it is possible to infer a few reasonable conclusions. It is evident that this was a single-core site. On sites with multiple-cores, the high concentration regularly spread over more than one field unit. In fact only the very small, single-core sites, like those uncovered on grids 1, 3 or 20 were encompassed within the limits of a single field block. This implies that the possible site on field block 342 couldn't have been much larger. The analysis of the distribution of the finds collected by individual field walking transects also showed that the main concentration was recorded on the field block's central sections. On the basis of this record we can argue that this site measured less than 1000 sq meters. In this view its site halo is fairly large, for it could extend for over 100 meters to the east and south of the site area. As argued in the appendix, this still leaves a considerable room for the halos of sites 26 and 10. The lengths of their maximum radii merely become more proportional to their rank and size.

V.3.3 The off-site zone

According to the collections by individual transect units (on average, more thoroughly executed than the transect collections east of the Skopje-Kučevište road), there are no traces of Roman settlement on the western ridge. Only on a small group of field blocks in the northern end of the ridge and opposite the site on grids 15-18 does the artifact density exceed the limit of 2.5 fragments per 1000 sq meters (map V_18a, table 22a, Appendix IV). On the rest of the field blocks the Roman material was completely absent from the transect collections. In fact if the transect collections are adjusted to represent 100% of the material counted, even these group of field blocks join the zone of lower than average artifact density, further enhancing the contrast between the western and the eastern ridge (map V_18c).

It is unfortunate that all but one of the grid surveys on the western ridge covered field units where the transect survey records showed near or complete absence of Roman finds (map V_18b). Nevertheless in nearly all grid collections there were small amounts of Roman material (table 22b, Appendix IV). This implies that the off-site carpet of Roman finds continues to spread over the western ridge of the survey area. The maximum density recorded on grid units on the western ridge is around 2 fragments per 100 sq meters, while the average densities on gridded areas range between less than 1 and 3.6 fragments per 1000 sq meters. These tiny collections were usually gathered from smaller groups of contingent grid units. Roman material was absent from the greater portion of the gridded areas. In this respect the off-site carpet on the western ridge strongly resembles the distribution in the off-site zone revealed in the Sopot survey. Being found alongside much larger quantities of Late Ottoman-Early Modern or

prehistoric material, it's hardly a surprise that these scatters came to light only after the processing of the material.

Looking at the distribution of the Roman finds on grids 21 and 23, one sees a handful of finds dispersed along one or two neighbouring rows of units and forming ultra-thin carpets of less than 1 fragment per 100 sq meters (maps V_18b, 18d). The only exception was grid 25, covering field blocks 170 and 171 in the northern end of the western ridge. Here the thin carpet of Roman finds covers the entire grid giving an average density of 3.6 fragments per 1000 sq meters. This confirms the results of the transect survey, which recorded slightly higher artifact densities on these two field units. This record also demonstrates that even very small amounts of Roman material could increase the densities recorded by the transect survey to over 4 fragments per 1000 sq meters. This is especially the case on field units with smaller areas and on which the collections by transect units were carried out more thoroughly. It warns us against overestimating the true amounts of Roman material on some of the field units that were left out of the grid survey and on which the transect survey recorded densities of 5-6 Roman shards per 1000 sq meters. Nevertheless the total survey on grid 25 confirmed an increase in the amount of Roman material along a south-north access, albeit a rather slight one. This could be related to the denser off-site carpet on field blocks surrounding the site on grids 15-18, but it could equally spread from a site situated beyond the survey's northern limit. Note that the majority of the field units with densities of Roman material approaching the survey's average are located along the lower terraces of the western ridge. At present the western ridge is artificially separated from the eastern ridge by a tall escarpment cut during the construction of the Skopje-Kučevište asphalt road. Originally the slopes of the two ridges must have merged more gently around the head of the shallow basin.

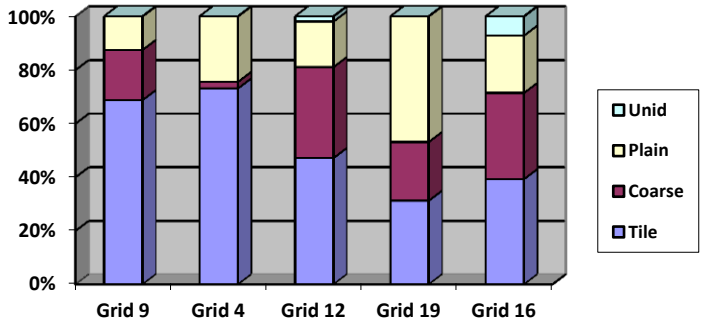
The percentage of Roman material in the transect and grid collections from the western ridge is tiny (graph 17, Appendix IV). It is far lower even in comparison to the grid collections covering the off-site zone on the eastern ridge. Finds datable to the Roman Period never exceed 4% of the collections excluding discarded material, which in the case of the western ridge consisted almost exclusively of the Late Ottoman-Early Modern debris. This is in itself a clear indicator that there are no on-site densities on the western ridge, including its northern end.

As explained in the section dealing with the remains from the prehistoric periods, despite the evident similarities concerning micro-topography and proximity to agricultural resources, the western ridge is a less favorable settlement location. In particular its eastern slopes are relatively steep and hardly inhabitable. The summit of the ridge and the western slope communicate only with the floor of the neighbouring basin to the west and with the village Kučevište. Because of this circumstance the western ridge doesn't have a direct access to the main local road connecting the foothills of Mt. Montenegro with the Skopje Basin. In addition it seems that the western half of the survey is drier and at slightly greater distances from the nearest known freshwater springs.

The analysis of the Roman assemblages from the Sopot survey showed fairly consistent differences in the composition of on-site and off-site collections. This wasn't the case with the Roman material from the second survey, at least in its eastern half. Further confusing the distinction between the site and the off-site, the composition of small off-site collections was often rather similar to the typical domestic assemblages. In fact the problem arises from the considerable differences between the off-site collections from various sections of the eastern ridge (graph V_2). In some collections such as those from grids 4 and 9, architectural ceramics was by far the most predominant category, comprising almost 70% of the assemblage. In others,

such as the collections from grids 12, 16 and 19, the presence of brick and tile is far less prominent and in contrast to the collections from grids 4 and 9 there is a significant percentage of coarse ware. As discussed in Appendix IV, these variations in the composition of the off-site cannot be related to the micro-location or to the proximity of on-site clusters. Although grid 9 was located in the immediate vicinity of a site, it yielded a very different collection from those that came from the identically positioned grids 12 and 16. Similar variations were observed in the off-site collections from field blocks 294 and 303b, both situated to the west of the site on field blocks 289a-291a (graph 14, Appendix IV).

Graph V_2: Composition of the total collections from the off-site and the halo zone



We have a nearly identical situation on the western ridge. Because of the small number of finds from this survey section, we analyzed the integral collections by grid and transect units. As shown on graph 18 in Appendix IV, although covering the same portions of the western ridge, there were considerable differences between the compositions of the grid and the transect collections. Thus the composition of the off-site material changes not only across various portions of the survey area, but even with changing collection strategies. Surprisingly enough the transect collections included a higher percentage of pottery and less architectural ceramics. This is contrary to what we expected assuming that brick and tile are more obtrusive than pottery fragments. Analyzing in greater details the transect collections from the site on field blocks 289a-291a and its surroundings, we predicted that architectural ceramics will always be overrepresented in the transect collections. It was thought that the more sensitive grid collections will include a larger number of pottery fragments. But the comparison of the transect and the grid collections from the western survey section showed that this wasn't necessarily true.

In the appendix we also examined the possibility that the inconsistencies in the composition of the off-site record could result from the fact that the analyzed grid collections were often small and limited to very small segments of the off-site. However the analysis of the collections by individual field walking transects from the southern and eastern halves of the eastern ridge (excluding field blocks covering certain or possible site areas) showed that the variations persist regardless of the representatives of the sample. For reasons we still cannot understand, there is a dichotomy between the composition of the transect collections from the southern and northern half of the eastern ridge. In the transect collections from the southern half, pottery is more numerous than tile and plain fabrics are more prominent than coarse ware; in collections from the northern half tile is far more numerous than plain pottery, while the percentage of coarse ware remains stable.

Apparently the only more or less consistent feature of the off-site collections in the second survey is the stronger presence of coarse pottery, which is in a complete contrast to the

composition of the off-site collections from Sopot. Larger quantities of coarse ware were discovered in the majority of the collections regardless of their location and the collection strategy. As explained earlier, among the Roman material from Skopian Montenegro it was possible to define a number of different coarse fabric groups. On the other hand, only a few fabric groups were recognized as coarse ware among the Roman material from Sopot. It is possible that some of the fabric groups from the Sopot material were erroneously classed as plain pottery, while plain fabric groups from Skopian Montenegro were treated as coarse ware. However we believe that the classification of the material in both survey areas was fairly consistent and that the increased presence of coarse fabrics in the second survey area has to do with the local traditions of pottery production and the different character of the local raw materials. As explained in an earlier paragraph, the distinction between coarse and plain pottery was made on the basis of the formal fabric features and it doesn't imply a functional distinction.

Comparing the off-site records on the western and eastern ridge, the differences are more than apparent. On the eastern ridge the off-site carpet is far more compact covering most of the survey area east of the Skopje-Kučevište road. Sterile stretches are fairly limited. Moreover the eastern ridge features a much denser off-site carpet. As shown on grids 1 or 18, artifact densities of over 1 fragment per 100 sq meters can continuously cover fairly extensive sections. Indeed on certain grids covering the off-site zone close to sites (grid 1 or 12), the maximum artifact density could reach up to 6-7 fragments per 100 sq meters, approaching the site threshold. This gradual dissipation of the surface material outwards from the site area explains the difficulties in determining the site limits. Small but sudden peaks in the nearer off-site zone are sometimes difficult to distinguish from separate sites of a minor size or the so called satellites. The western ridge on the other hand lacks a continuous carpet of Roman material. As in Sopot there are small and very thin scatters separated by large zones where the Roman finds are completely absent from the surface record. However looking at the integral distribution of the Roman material in the second survey area, it is clear that even on the eastern ridge it doesn't form a continuous carpet with even artifact densities. Most of the clusters featuring on-site densities are surrounded by roughly concentric zones of decreasing artifact densities. It is as if the on-site distribution pattern is repeated on a larger scale. Most of the Roman sites and particularly the clusters featuring full domestic ceramic assemblages have generated their own off-site zone, sometimes intersecting with the off-site zones of their neighbours, sometimes separated by sterile or nearly sterile stretches[398]. The latter are typified by the findings on grids 9 and 13 and on the grid surveys on the western ridge. On the other hand, the off-site zone surrounding the site areas was partly captured on grids 1, 4, 12, 18 and 27. They are completely covered with a thin carpet of Roman material featuring between 0.6 and 2.3 fragments per 100 sq meters, but on certain locations artifact densities could suddenly increase to 6-7 fragments per 100 sq meters. Such fluctuations are unparalleled in the farther off-site zone, where the average artifact densities barely exceed 2-3 fragments per 1000 sq meters. This denser off-site zone marks the immediate surroundings of the site, its impact zone or site halo. It could be generated by the regular bringing of manure on the most intensively cultivated fields, but also by remains of less intensive, non-residential activities. As was shown on grids 1-2 or on grid 18, larger sites are sometimes accompanied by smaller satellite clusters, barely emerging from the off-site carpet surrounding the site. Because of their low prominence in the surface record they rarely came to light prior to the processing of the finds. As they usually appear at distances not greater than 100

[398]Cf. J. Bintliff, 29-38, 2005.

meters from the sites within the nearer off-site, it is possible that they represent outbuildings or remains of other non-residential activities.

How does this distribution in the off-site zone compare to the situation revealed in the Sopot survey? Outside the site area on almost all gridded sites, it is possible to observe a narrow belt of intermediary density, extending for not more than a dozen to 20 meters from the edge of the site. This phenomenon was observed in both survey areas and regardless of the time-period. More extensive carpets of average or low artifact density were only typical for a few historic periods. But although in general there lacks the evidence of continuous carpets of surface artifacts for the prehistoric periods in the Sopot survey, we often documented small concentrations of finds usually limited to the same topographic units occupied by the settlement. We believe that these scatters extending for up to 300-400 meters from the central site have their analogy among the halos of Roman sites in Skopian Montenegro. The fact that they are less extensive than the impact zone of prehistoric sites in the first survey is in accord with their smaller size[399]. In the case of Skopian Montenegro in the Roman period, there clearly lacks a continuous off-site carpet emanating from a single residential centre. Rather each of the discovered sites has generated its own halo spread over several field blocks (1-2 hectares), not necessarily symmetric to the site. But the survey also identified a very thin, discontinuous carpet spread over the entire survey area that couldn't be related to any particular site. This was sometimes termed the "farther off-site", although it would be less confusing to simply term this phenomenon the off-site and use the term halo for the zone of intermediary density spreading for over 100 meters from the site edges. Seemingly the distribution of Roman material in the off-site zone of the first survey doesn't exhibit a finer structuring. But in retrospective in Sopot too, it is possible to observe an increased artifact density and satellite clusters around the central settlement on site 5a-5b and an ultra-thin off-site carpet, occupying the entire western half of the survey area.

V.3.3 Analysis of the integral network of Roman sites and land-use

Because of the peculiar distribution patterns in both the on-site and the off-site zones, it is difficult to answer even the seemingly simple question of how many Roman sites are there in the second survey. The grid surveys fully or partly uncovered 14 certain clusters of Roman material, while the transect survey indicated at least three other potential clusters, which the total grid survey failed to locate. In addition there were a number of lower density peaks that were interpreted as satellite clusters. These were all spatially distinct clusters, separated by zones of low or average artifact densities. They stood apart from their surroundings only thanks to the increased quantities of surface material. However the differences could vary considerably, which also proved problematic for the interpretation of the survey findings. On some clusters, such as those uncovered on grids 11 and 20, the difference between the artifact densities recorded on the site cores and on the site periphery was often greater than tenfold. These two clusters featured the maximum densities of Roman material in the second survey, around 65 fragments on site 11 and 80 fragments per 100 sq meters on site 20. Much gentler differences were observed on the clusters uncovered on grids 27, 10 and 2, but still the on-site densities were several times higher than on the site's immediate surroundings, with maximal densities of about 30 fragments per 100 sq meters. Understandably most problematic are the tiny clusters, such as those on grids 1, 14

[399] J. Bintliff, A. Snodgrass, 506-513, 1988; T. J. Wilkinson, 1989, especially tab 1 where we see that even sites smaller than 1.5 ha can produce off-site carpets with radii of 200-400 meters.

and the dubious cluster on grid 19, all three featuring a maximum density lower than 20 fragments per 100 sq meters. On these grid units the difference between the densities recorded on the site cores and the densities recorded on peripheral units was barely two or threefold. Variations of such a scale are rare, but not untypical for the halo zone. Hence it is sometimes very difficult to decide if these are only anomalous peaks in the off-site zone or faint traces of non-residential activities.

Concerning the size of the clusters, they can be grouped into four basic categories. As was shown the grid survey didn't always manage to determine the exact limits of the sites. Nevertheless taking into account the area revealed by the grid survey, each of the discovered clusters can roughly be classed as a small, small to medium, medium and large-sized cluster[400]. The group of small-sized clusters includes the clusters revealed on grids 1, 3, 7, 14, 20 and possibly site 5. They all occupy areas not larger than or around 500 sq meters and with the exception of the site on grid 20, they are usually thinner than the other three categories. On these clusters the artifact density rarely exceeds 20 shards per 100 sq meters. The next group of small to medium-sized clusters includes slightly larger and denser clusters. These are basically the sites uncovered on grids 6 and 8, both problematic regarding their exact extents. They measure around 800 sq meters, with maximum densities ranging between 20 and 30 fragments per 100 sq meters. The category of medium-sized sites includes the clusters uncovered on grids 10, 26, 27 and possibly the one on grid 11. These clusters occupy areas measuring about 2 000 sq meters and are usually well-defined against the background scatters, though the maximum artifact density rarely exceeds 30 fragments per 100 sq meters. The cluster on grid 11 remains problematic, although the revealed portion measures slightly over 2 600 sq meters. There remained the problem of its relation with the concentration of Roman finds on grid 5, a couple of dozen meters from its northern edge. If this was a continuation of the same cluster, then the site on grids 5 and 11 would belong to the category of large-sized clusters. In case they were separate, the cluster on grid 11 would fall into the category of medium-sized clusters, while the one on grid 5 to the category of small-sized clusters. Site 11 is also characterized by one of the highest maximum densities of over 66 shards per 100 sq meters. Finally, the sites uncovered on grids 2 and 15-18 certainly belong to the category of large-sized clusters. They are far larger than the rest of the clusters measuring over 5 000 sq meters, though the maximal artifact densities equalled the densities recorded on smaller clusters. Earlier in the discussion we also mentioned that the tiny concentration on grid 13 could present a separate class of non-residential sites. More data are needed to test the character of this cluster. It is an isolated example in this survey area and as in the case of grid 19, the low artifact density provides no secure basis to separate it from the off-site zone.

The size of the sites on field blocks 289a-291a and 47a-b, 49-50 and 66 can barely be guessed on the basis of the transect survey record. We're nonetheless rather confident that these were the remains of multiple-core, small to medium or medium-sized sites. The collections by individual transect units suggest that the increased artifact density was limited to smaller portions of the field blocks' areas. These concentrations probably repeat the patterns revealed on grids 15-18 or 6-7, where we see two or more closely spaced small-sized clusters. It is very unlikely that on-site densities spread over the intervening stretches between the separate site components, as on site 15-18. If these two sites formed extensive and compact clusters, it is difficult to accept

[400] A similar categorization has been proposed for the Roman rural sites discovered in the South Etruria Survey, T.W. Potter, 12, 1979; where apart from site area the author takes into account the character of the material to distinguish between huts, farms and villas.

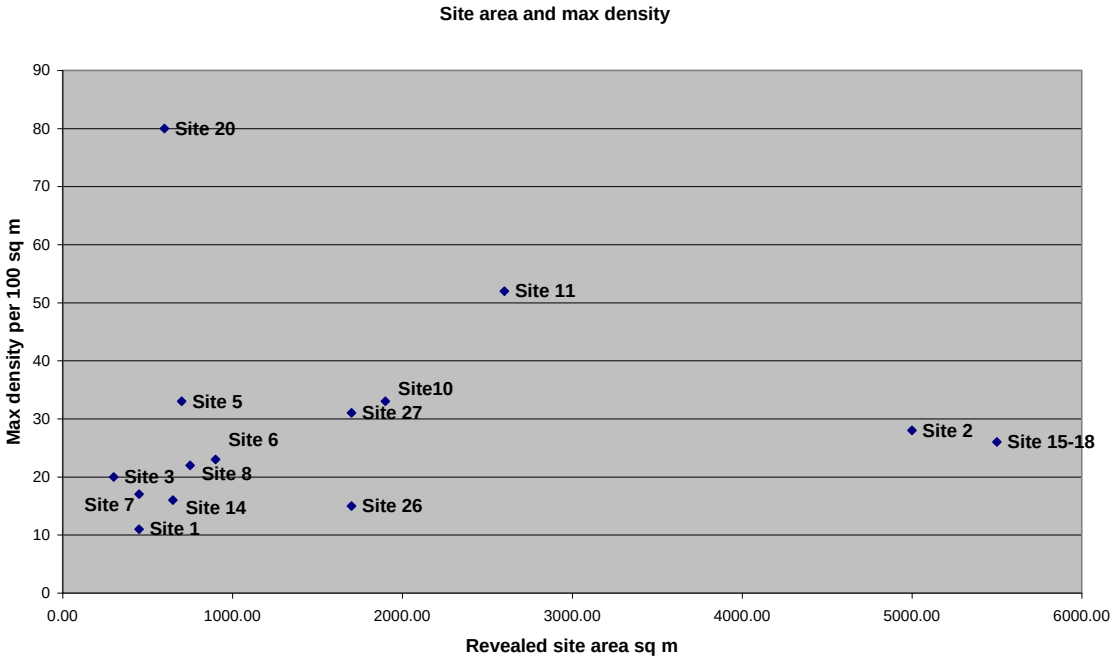
their complete disappearance from the surface record within a period of just a few months. Finally we have the group of possible sites on field blocks 270a-271, 342 and 394. They all came to light only after the individual transect collections were adjusted to include 100% of the material counted. A common feature for these concentrations is that on-site densities are limited to one or two field units and sometimes even further confined to a certain section of the field block. It is certain that these are single-core sites, not larger than 800 sq meters. However there is the important difference between the hypothetical site on field block 342 and those on field blocks 270a-271 and 394. Like the rest of the residential sites, the former has generated a fairly extensive carpet of intermediary density, while the latter two feature only very narrow belts of intermediary density, similar to those recorded on grids 3 and 20.

Tab V_1: The area of Roman clusters documented by the grid survey

Cluster Number	Maximum area	Cluster Number	Maximum area
Cluster on grid 1	ca 350 sq m	Grid 5?	ca. 750 sq m
Grid 3	ca 300 sq m	Grid 10	ca 1900 sq m
Grid 7	ca 450 sq m	Grid 26	ca 2200 sq m
Grid 14	ca 650 sq m	Grid 27	ca 1800 sq m
Grid 20	> 600 sq m	Grid 11	> 2 600 sq m
Grid 6	ca 800 sq m	Grid 2	ca 5000 sq m
Grid 8	> 750 sq m	Grids 15, 17, 18	ca 5500 sq m

Because of the peculiar context in which they were discovered, it makes little sense to assign ranks to the various site-size categories. First, we have to consider the possibility that at least in some cases a group of smaller neighbouring sites functioned as a single farming/dwelling unit or even that the entire group functioned as a single, dispersed settlement. As was shown in the preceding paragraphs and later in this discussion, it is indeed rather inconvenient to interpret each physically separate cluster as a separate dwelling unit. At the same time, the collected finds show a great uniformity regarding the absence of luxurious material. Only the cluster on grid 3 stood apart because of the small quantity of fine pottery, stone rubble and primarily because of its micro-location. There is thus no basis to differentiate between the clusters in this regard. The absence of fine ware and architectural remains is certainly significant for determining the social rank of the entire network and will be discussed below.

Graph V_3: Revealed site area and max artifact density (discards included)

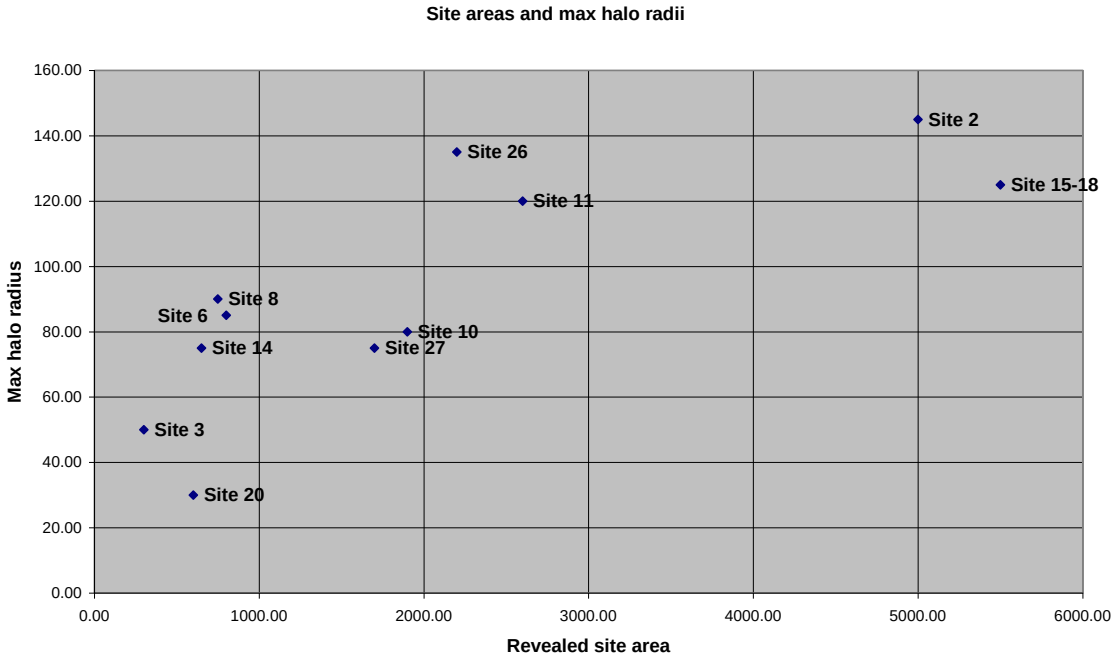


Discussing the distribution and the limits of individual clusters we noted that some of the sites differ in terms of the maximum density and the quality of the material (graph V_3). As has been demonstrated by earlier research, there is in general very little correlation between site area and on-site density[401]. To illustrate this it suffices to mention that the small or small to medium-sized site on grid 20 featured the highest artifact density with about 80 fragments per 100 sq meters and one of the heaviest collections in the survey area. Although ten times larger, the maximum artifact density on the clusters on grids 2 and 15-18 is not higher than 30 shards per 100 sq meters. Similarly the medium-sized site on grid 26 featured a maximum density of only 15 fragments per 100 sq meters, less than the maximum density recorded on some of the small-sized sites. There is an even weaker correlation when the average on-site densities are considered, in which case the very small sites on grids 20 and 3 are the densest.

On-site density can be determined by the longevity and intensity of site use, but in this case primacy must be given to post-depositional factors. We may recall the cases of the clusters on grids 11 or 7, where the high artifact density could simply reflect the extreme fragmentation of the material. In fact we saw that entire clusters can disappear and reappear on the surface within a period of a few months. In general sites in the second survey rarely featured maximum densities higher than 35 fragments per 100 sq meters and the average density usually ranged between 7 and 15 fragments per 1000 sq meters. Note that 9 out of 14 gridded sites have maximum artifact densities ranging between 10 and 35 fragments per 1000 sq meters. Sites in the first survey area formed denser clusters, although there were considerable variations from site to site and from period to period. In fact sites dated to the Roman-Late Roman Period in the Sopot survey were likewise fairly thin, with maximum artifact densities lower than 30 fragments per 100 sq meters.

[401] J.L. Bintliff, A.M. Snodgrass, 133-134, 1985.

Graph V_4: Revealed site areas (x axis, sq m) and maximum halo radii (y axis, ha)



Testing the relation between the site area and the size of the halo or the nearer off-site zone seems like a far more useful pursuit. The narrow intermediary zone separating the site from the off-site is on most clusters limited to strips not wider than 15-20 meters. But the more extensive and thinner scatters forming what was called the halo zone or the nearer off-site spread over larger areas that clearly vary from site to site. Adopting the interpretation that these scatters were produced by subsidiary buildings, intense manure and rubbish disposal implies that they roughly coincide with the sites' inner territories[402]. In this respect they are analogous to the satellite clusters from the first survey area, usually found limited on the same micro-topographic unit where the main cluster was situated. However there are a number of practical difficulties than need to be elaborated prior to the analysis. We saw that even determining the site area can be quite difficult because of the relatively small differences between the on-site and the off-site, as well as the peculiar distribution of the on-site clusters. The thin carpet surrounding the sites is understandably far more elusive and the peculiar on-site distribution inevitably affects the distribution in the off-site. The total grid survey demonstrated that concentric on-site patterns are the exception and not the rule in this survey area. On-site concentrations are interrupted by low density strips, while small on-site densities suddenly appear in the off-site zone. But above all it is the very low artifact density that makes the recognition of this zone impossible in practice. The couple of instances where we managed to cover larger sections of the site halos were by chance, as on grids 1 and 4 where we suspected genuine archaeological sites. In consequence the limits of this zone can hardly be determined with a greater precision. In most of the cases the extent of the halos can only be roughly estimated on the basis of the transect survey collections. As we saw these are rather difficult to interpret, especially for the purpose of estimating the extent of continuous clusters. For the present purpose, we took the lower threshold of the median density of at least 2.5 fragments per 1000 sq meters. This will most probably overestimate their extents

[402] J. Bintliff, P. Howard, A. Snodgrass, 23-23, 2007; S.E. Alcock, J.F. Cherry, J.L. Davis, 142, ed I. Morris, 1994; T. J. Wilkinson, tab. 1, 1989.

because even very sparse off-site carpets such as those on the western ridge can increase the artifact density to over 3 fragments per 1000 sq meters of transect survey. Equally detrimental to the analysis, the transect survey can hardly distinguish between extensive, continuous and localized but dense concentrations.

Further complicating the matter, both the transect and the grid survey results indicate that the halos were rarely forming symmetric rings around the sites[403]. For example, on grids 15-18 where the total survey covered a larger continuous block of land, on the western periphery the site halo is not wider than 50 meters, while to the north it stretches for at least 90 meters. Similar conclusions can be made on the basis of the transect survey results. The cluster on grid 10 is bounded by field units featuring higher artifact density to the south and east, but not to the west where the small radius of the impact zone is confirmed by the total grid survey. This is also characteristic for the probable clusters on field blocks 47a-b, 49-50 and 289a-291a, where the higher artifact density extends only on one or two sides of the site area and is most probably asymmetric to the main cluster. It is significant that these zones are not necessarily spreading on ground levels lower than the central clusters, as illustrated by the sites on grids 1, 14 and 15-18. The halo zones of these sites spread mostly on the terraces above the site areas.

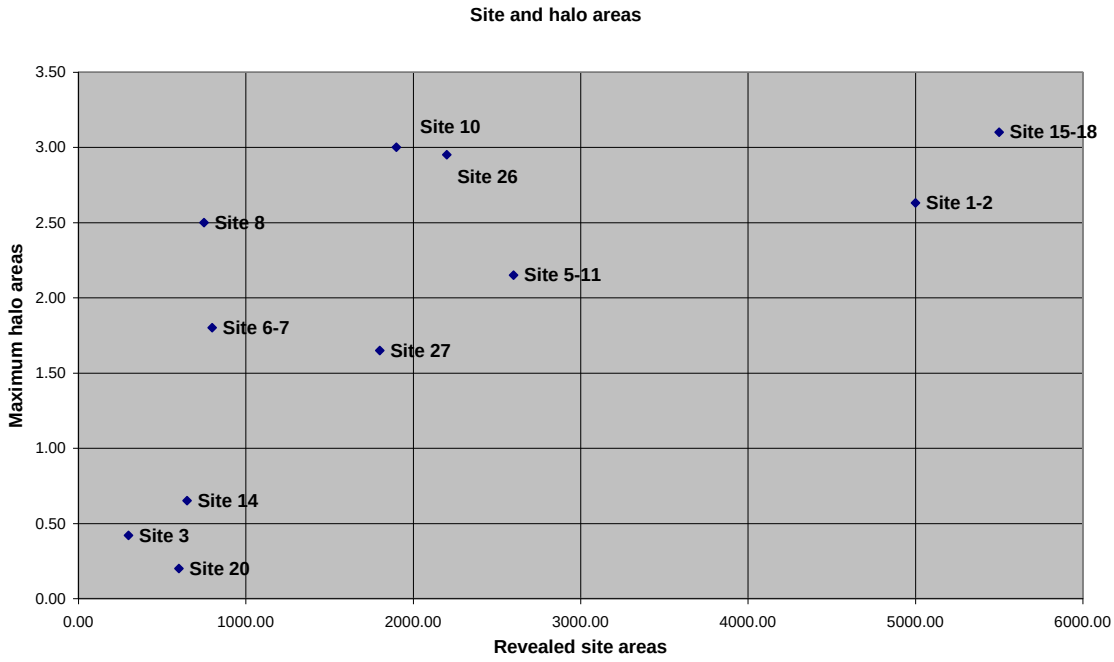
Because of the relatively low survey resolution and the irregular shapes of the scatters, we considered the maximum radius of the halo measured from the edge of the site (graph V_4). This doesn't eliminate all problems surrounding this exercise as in a number of cases it is impossible to distinguish between the halos of neighbouring sites. One of the more problematic examples was the group of sites on grids 6, 7 and 8, all situated within a radius of 70-80 meters and "sharing" the halo zone partly revealed by grid 4 and on the surrounding field blocks. The same difficulty surrounds the drawing of the limit that separates the halos of site 2 and the cluster on field units 47a-b, 49, 50 and 66. The status of the concentration on field block 66 remains vague and although this doesn't affect the halo radius of site 1-2, it does have a considerable effect on the maximum halo radius of the site on field blocks 47a-b, 49-50. In these and similar cases (for example, the sites on grids 15-18 and 27 or on grids 1-2 and 5-11), it was necessary to arbitrarily divide the shared portions of the halo zone into two equal halves assuming that the neighbouring sites were of an equal rank. But this is not always possible because in some cases (such as the previously mentioned example of the sites on field blocks 47a-b, 49-50 and 66), we lack information about the exact size and location of the site. As these basic parameters are missing, all three sites revealed by the transect survey on field blocks 47a-b, 49-50; 289a-291a and 342 had to be excluded from the analysis. But essentially the same problem is posed by the smaller, satellite clusters such as those on grids 1 or 5, situated in the centre of the impact zones of the larger sites on grids 2 and 11. In these cases as in the case of site 7, the satellite clusters were treated as parts of the halo zone of their larger neighbours. The suspected satellite clusters indicated by the transect survey on the halo peripheries of nearly half of the sites in this survey area were likewise treated as a segment of the halo zone. An exception was made for the few ambiguously located satellites, such as the one on field block 328b situated by the eastern survey limit or the one on field block 66 situated at an equal distance between the sites on grids 1-2 and on field blocks 47a-b, 49-50. Like the residential sites on field blocks 47a-b, 49-50 and 289a-291a, they had to be excluded from the analysis.

It is thus important to remember that graph V_4 correlates only the revealed site areas and the maximum halo radii. The latter parameter gives a rather imprecise estimate of the extent of the halo and in cases where the location of the central cluster is uncertain or when it lies at the

[403] Cf. J. Bintliff, P. Howard, A. Snodgrass, 2007, a number of examples in Appendix A, 183-312.

edge of the halo zone, it can even be misleading. Therefore we also tried to provisionally determine the actual halo areas by adding together all field blocks contingent to the sites that feature artifact densities higher than 2.5-3 fragments per 1000 sq meters (graph V_5). The exact location of the site had no effect on the approximate extent of the halo zone and the decision to include or exclude one or two field units from the site halo made little difference for the maximum halo areas. When the maximum radius is measured, the inclusion of a single field unit can in certain cases extend the halo zone for nearly 100%. But measuring the approximate halo areas also has its own disadvantages. This approach is particularly problematic for sites that were revealed close to or on the very edge of the survey area. These include the sites on grids 5-11, 26 and 15-18. Particularly for the first two cases, the halo radii are a better index than the halo areas, because we don't know if and how far they extended beyond the survey limits.

Graph V_5: Revealed site areas and maximum halo areas.



Both charts demonstrate that there isn't a particularly strong correlation between the revealed site areas and the extent of the halo zone, especially when the latter is expressed as the maximum halo area. Large clusters like those on grids 1-2 and 15-18 tend to have larger halo radii and larger halo areas, but medium-sized sites can feature equally large or even larger halos. The two largest sites on grids 1-2 and 15-18 feature maximum halo radii ranging between 120 and 150 meters, while in terms of area they measure between 2.7 and 3.1 hectares. This is very close to the extent of the halos of the medium-sized sites on grids 5-11 and 26 and if the maximum halo area is considered, the medium-sized site on grid 10 is ranked second, its halo measuring about 3 hectares. We believe however that the halo areas of both sites 10 and 26 are smaller than 3 hectares, as the periphery of their halo zones could belong to the potential site on field block 342. Note that when the maximum area is estimated, the site on grids 5-11 is ranked lower than some medium or small to medium sized sites. This is certainly related to the fact that this site was situated by the eastern limit of the survey area and it is possible that we have only revealed a portion of its halo. Predictably sites located closer to the centre of the halo zone are

ranked higher when the halo areas are compared. The most notable example is the site on grid 8. Classed as a small to medium-sized site, with a revealed site area of at least 750 sq meters, it has a halo with an average radius of about 80-85 meters, but in terms of area it has the fifth largest halo in the survey stretching over 2.60 ha. Admittedly the cluster on grid 8 is not the best example as it is very probable that the site occupied a larger area, a probability that seems to be confirmed by this analysis.

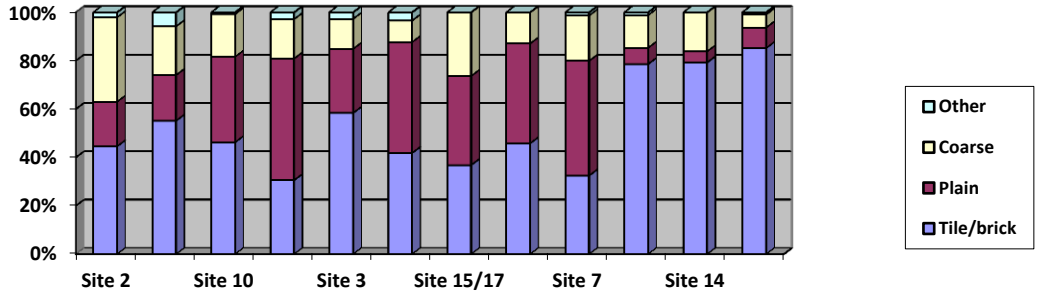
As can be seen on the charts, there is a considerable overlap between the categories of small to medium and medium-sized sites. Some medium-sized sites like the one on grid 27 can produce rather small site halos. The maximum radius of this site's halo is less than 75 meters long and its estimated area is barely over 1.5 hectares. The cluster on grid 6, although twice as smaller has a maximum halo radius of about 80 meters and an estimated halo area of roughly 1.75 hectares. But in the case of the site on grid 6, we have to consider the fact that the neighbouring cluster on grid 7 was eliminated from the analysis and included in the halo area of site 6. The same was applied to the rest of the satellite clusters, but in the case of the cluster on grid 7 it is possible that we are dealing with a separate core of the site on grid 6. If these two clusters are joined into a single site, it would rank as a medium-sized site and the extent of its halo would be more proportional to its site area. Naturally in such a case, we would also have to revise the eastward extent of the site halo measuring it from the edge of the cluster on grid 7 rather than from grid 6, but this wouldn't affect the size of the maximum halo area. The other problematic cluster on grid 8 also has a possibly larger site area. Thus the two sites that mostly alter the predicted positive correlation between the site and the halo area need to be shifted slightly to the right on the charts, leaving a visible concentration of small-sized sites in the lower right corner of the charts. This doesn't cancel the fact that there aren't particularly strong differences between medium and large-sized sites, but it rectifies the almost random fluctuations in the extent of the halos of the small and small to medium-sized clusters. Basically all sites smaller than 1000 sq meters produced halo areas smaller than 1 hectare or a maximum radius measuring less than 80 meters.

The variations between the sites, both in terms of halo radii and halo areas are relatively large. The halo radii can range from less than 30 meters on site 20 to nearly 150 meters on site 2, while the halo areas can range from 0.2 and 0.4 hectares on sites 20 and 3 to nearly 3.15 hectares on site 15-18. There is very little clustering on the charts regarding both parameters. However three sites are set apart from the rest by their very small halo areas. These are the clusters on grids 3, 14 and 20. Sites 3 and 20 have radii shorter than 50 meters and all three feature halo areas smaller than 1 hectare. In fact site 20 with a halo spreading in a radius shorter than 30 meters or over an area of 2000 sq meters can justly be treated as a site lacking a halo or a nearer off-site zone. Site 3 and 14 have slightly more extensive halo zones, but they are negligible in comparison to their larger neighbours on grids 2 and 5-11. It is perhaps no coincidence that these clusters were also made distinct by the composition of their assemblages or their micro-locations. The clusters on grids 14 and 20 were almost exclusively made of tile fragments, while the cluster on grid 3 featured rare fragments of fine ware and occupied the most prominent location in the surveyed landscape.

The numerous difficulties surrounding the determination of the extent of the site halos as well as the small number of examples prevent us from observing a clear correlation between site size or character and the extent of the site halo. We can barely conclude that larger sites do tend to produce more extensive site halos, although medium and even small to medium-sized sites can sometimes produce equally large halo zones. This doesn't have to be related to the lack of higher

resolution data. It has to be stressed that the extent and the prominence of the site halo is affected by the same taphonomic processes that affect the on-site density and distribution. The fact that the differences in the site areas are relatively small and the likelihood that they were of a similar socio-economic rank also must contribute to the absence of marked and consistent differences in the size of this zone.

Graph V_6: Composition of the on-site assemblages.



During the interpretations of the individual clusters' ceramic collections, there was a feeling of dismay over the significant variations often observed in their composition. The percentage of architectural ceramics ranged between 30 and 90%, while the category of plain ware could comprise anywhere between 5 and 45% of the collections. There was less fluctuation in the amount of coarse ware in the on-site assemblages, but the ratio of coarse to fine/plain ware often changed significantly from cluster to cluster. In principle however, one can distinguish between two basic types of sites on the basis of the presence of the basic categories in the ceramic assemblages (graph V_6). One is the group featuring a more balanced composition of the finds, with brick and tile representing between 35 and 65% of the assemblage and fine/plain ware being more prevalent than coarse ware. This group practically includes all on-site collections, except those collected from grids 8, 14 and 20 (the last three bars on the right). The most extreme examples of this group are the assemblages from grids 7 and 11; the former is comprised of only about 30% architectural ceramic, while in the latter the coarse ware category comprises less than 10% of the Roman collection. In the majority of the on-site assemblages brick and tile are more numerous, while coarse ware represents at least 10% of the finds[404]. Nevertheless the variations exhibited by these two assemblages are relatively insignificant when compared to the composition of the second group of assemblages. This group includes the clusters on grids 8, 14 and 20. They are all characterized by a very pronounced predominance of architectural ceramics, comprising between 80 and 90% of the material. Pottery fragments comprise less than 20% of the assemblages and coarse ware is usually slightly more numerous than fine/plain ware. Similarly composed assemblages were collected from the peripheral parts of the first survey area, where they were treated as non-residential sites. In the second survey these sites occupied different types of locations and they cannot be readily equatted with the sites with similarly composed assemblages from the Sopot survey.

The size of the cluster is seemingly unrelated to the composition of the ceramic assemblages. Sites featuring full domestic assemblages in practice appear in all sizes, from the

[404] This general scarcity of coarse ware could be related to its longer use-life in comparison to plain utilitarian vessels, as well as the higher price of certain coarse ware categories such as *dolia*, J.T. Peňa, 27-31, 56-7; 2007.

smallest (the cluster on grid 7), to the largest (the clusters on grids 2 and 15-18). However the clusters predominantly made up of brick and tile fragments either belong to the category of small sites (the clusters on grids 14 and 20) or to the category of small to medium-sized sites (the cluster on grid 8). Although we failed to demonstrate this clearly, it seems likely that in the Sopot survey too, this type of sites occupied smaller areas than the majority of sites featuring full domestic assemblages.

But despite the fact that this type of sites was observed in both survey areas and is documented by other intensive survey projects[405], one needs to be cautious when proposing functional interpretation solely on the basis of the composition of the ceramic assemblages. In this study it was suggested that these were possibly non-residential sites because they lacked a complete set of domestic pottery and featured a very small number of pottery fragments in general[406]. However the fact that the ceramic assemblages from these sites are made almost exclusively of brick and tile could very well be the result of certain taphonomic factors rather than reflecting the composition of the original assemblage. Most typically it's been observed that after initial collapse, the heavy roof constructions can effectively seal off deposits on the floor. As a result only a few artifacts find their way into the surface record. Sites that became part of the archaeological record following this model are likely to produce little else apart from tile on the surface, especially if recently disturbed[407].

Another difficulty surrounding the definition of the site limits and their function was the clear tendency of spatial differentiation of the basic functional categories observed on domestic sites. In a number of cases, most prominently the clusters on grids 10, 15-18, 27 and on field blocks 47a-b, 49-50, 66 and 289a-291a, architectural ceramics and pottery were concentrated on two different portions of the site area. In nearly all examples the two portions of the site formed an integral and continuous cluster, though one cannot exclude the possibility that in some cases the two portions formed discrete clusters. We suspected that this was the case with the site on field blocks 47a-b, 49-50 and 66, where the transect collections from each of the field blocks presented a differently composed assemblage. This on-site patterning can reflect the foci of different types of settlement activities and they can be related to repeated practices of cleansing the interior of the buildings from debris and its discard in pits or on the fields surrounding the building[408]. This may be an intriguing revelation, but it created problems during the interpretation of the integrity of neighbouring clusters. The site areas were not always uncovered in their entirety, opening a room for doubts over the completeness of the collected assemblages. The most illustrative example is the cluster uncovered on grid 11. Analyzed separately, the Roman assemblage collected from this grid exhibits a slightly unusual composition. It was characterized by a high presence of fine and plain ware (though probably lower than 40% when all finds are included) and far more erratically, very small amounts of coarse ware. But when the combined assemblages from grids 5 and 11 are considered jointly, their composition becomes similar to that on most other clusters (graph V_7). The percentage of architectural ceramics increases to nearly 50% and that of coarse ware to over 10% of the assemblage. Although still higher than usual, the percentage of fine/plain ware is lower than 40%. The cluster on grids 15-17 and 18 presented a similar example, though in this case the percentage of coarse ware was

[405] J.L. Bintliff, P. Howard, A.M. Snodgrass, sites LSE7, THS3, THS12, 2007; W. Cavanagh, C. Mee and P. James, et al. 2005; C. Mee, H. Forbes, eds. 1997.

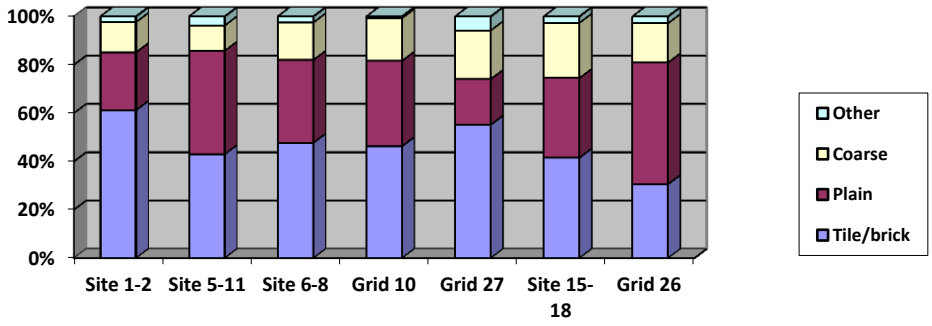
[406] T. Whitelaw, 227-228, eds. R. Francovich, H. Patterson, 2000.

[407] D. Pettegrew, 189- 209, 2001; J. Bintliff et al. 259-265, 2002.

[408] D. Pettegrew, 200-201, 2001.

higher in the collections from both components of the site. There were also doubts surrounding the completeness of the assemblages from grids 6, 7, 8 and 26, where the grid survey also failed to cover the entire site area, including the site halo. In these cases the analysis of the transect collections from field units where the extension of the site area is suspected showed that the composition of the assemblage wouldn't change dramatically. Nevertheless one needs to be reserved, for we saw that the composition of the collections can change dramatically even when different collection methods are applied.

Graph V_7: Composition of the joint assemblages from the central and the satellite clusters.



Bearing this in mind, it can be argued that the assemblages predominantly made up of architectural ceramics represent but single components of larger residential sites. Indeed at least one of these clusters wasn't completely uncovered by the grid survey. Examining this possibility in the case of the cluster on grid 8, it was considered very unlikely that this cluster would produce a full domestic assemblage had the grid survey been extended over the neighboring fields to the north. Not only because the compositions of the transect collections differed little from the total collections, but also because such a scarcity of pottery fragments was unparalleled even on portions of residential sites where the bulk of the architectural ceramics was concentrated. However analyzing the possible halo extents, we remarked that this site has one of the largest halos in this survey area, given that the increased artifact density on the neighboring fields is truly a result of a denser off-site carpet rather than a series of small, isolated clusters. In contrast to site 8, the other two sites which lacked full domestic assemblages (on grids 14 and 20) stood fairly isolated and didn't produce very extensive site halos. It was therefore suggested that either this was a partly revealed residential site or it formed an integral but dispersed site, including the smaller neighbours on grids 6 and 7. Indeed joining the assemblages collected from grids 6-8 will result in a full domestic assemblage, not much different than the assemblages on the majority of residential sites in the second survey area (graph V_7).

By the time of the total collections by grid units, it became clear that we were dealing with an extensive network of roughly contemporary buildings. The total grid survey revealed two concentrations of sites. One much larger group formed a nearly continuous chain along the upper portions of the eastern ridge and its low off-shoot, delimiting the survey area from the southeast. The clusters uncovered on grids 1-3, 5 and 11 form the northern half of this chain, occupying the upper portions and the top of the eastern ridge. The southern half of the chain includes the sites uncovered on grids 6-8, 10, 26 and the site on field block 342, all situated along the ridge of the low off-shoot. The second smaller group of sites includes the clusters on grids 15-18, 27 and 14. These sites occupy the apex of the surveyed basin, the northern end of the survey area. Although situated in the central parts of the basin, they lie at roughly the same altitude as the sites from the

first group. Only the cluster on grid 20 stands isolated on the floor of the basin, approximately 500 meters from the nearest site on grid 26.

There remained the problem of the possible sites overlooked by the transect survey and partly or entirely uncovered by the grid survey. The only examples are the scatters on grids 19 and 13. These two scatters exhibit different distribution patterns, but in both cases the problem arises from the low artifact densities. Although on both grids there are visible concentrations of Roman material, they are too tiny even in comparison with the category of small-sized clusters. As discussed, it is very difficult to distinguish them from similar peaks in the nearer off-site zone. For example, the scatter revealed on grid 19 differs little from the halo surrounding the site on grids 15-18. The poorly preserved fragments and the absence of larger concentrations of Roman material on the neighbouring field units cast further doubts over the character of the collection from grid 19. The case of the potential cluster on grid 13 presents a slightly different case that was already discussed. Even if this is truly a separate site, it was of a very different character than the rest of the Roman sites discovered in this survey. Clusters of such small dimensions and volume are impossible to locate and define, unless the entire area is covered by total grid survey. If the tiny cluster on grid 13 is an authentic site, then it is almost certain that there are a number of similar sites that remained unnoticed. But even in such a case, they wouldn't affect the network of residential sites on the eastern ridge.

The combined findings of the transect and the grid survey present undeniable evidence that a larger portion of the eastern ridge was occupied by installations very similar to those discovered along its ridge or in the northern end of the surveyed basin (map V_21). The two possible sites (or groups of sites) left out of the grid survey partly fill in the empty stretch in the central portions of the eastern ridge. The clusters on field blocks 47a/b, 49-50 are situated only about 100 meters west of the site on grid 2, on the same terrace as the sites on grids 5, 11 and 27. Approximately 250 meters to the south, on the same terrace as the cluster on grid 10, lies the potential site on field blocks 289a-290a. The network of Roman sites on the eastern ridge was evidently denser, though the group of sites in the northern end of the survey remains slightly more isolated. Recognizing the existence of these two sites doesn't change the fact that the focus of the extensive network of farms and houses was on the upper portions of the eastern ridge.

Distances between neighbouring clusters can range anywhere from 50-60 to 250 meters. Clearly the greatest concentration of sites is along the eastern ridge, especially in its southern part. Here the sites on grids 6-8 and 10 and the one on field block 342 are situated at intervals of 60 to 70 meters. However it has to be emphasized that all of these sites, except the one on grid 10 belong to the categories of small or small to medium-sized clusters and could form an integral, dispersed establishment. Even smaller are the distances between the clusters on grids 1 and 2 and on grids 5 and 11, where a large-sized cluster was accompanied by a smaller satellite, situated less than 40 meters from the edge of the larger cluster. Although these are physically separate clusters, they are positioned so close to each other, in all probability they functioned as parts of a single unit. They consist of the same fabric groups and the satellite clusters are too small and thin in comparison to their larger neighbours. It is therefore difficult to imagine them functioning as separate settlement units.

Indeed focusing only on the distances between medium and large-sized sites, a slightly more regular pattern is revealed (map V_22). In such a case, the distances between most neighbouring groups of sites measure between 120 and 250 meters, although the clustering of sites along the top of the eastern ridge and in the northern end of the central survey section persists.

These groups of clusters are arranged theatrically along the gently sloping terraces of the eastern ridge. To a certain degree the possible non-residential clusters on grids 14 and 20, as well as those on field blocks 394 and 270a-271 contradict this pattern. They appear rather isolated and unrelated to any of the clusters that form the network. In this respect they are different from the similarly composed cluster on grid 8 positioned in the immediate vicinity of the clusters on grids 5-11 and 6-7-10, although this site too was ambiguously related to its neighbours. As explained in the discussion of the individual sites, one should allow that the described network of residential sites was completed by an unknown number of minor satellites, such as those on field blocks 284, 336 or 119.

The cluster on grid 3 needs to be separated from the rest of the Roman sites in this survey area. In terms of size and the on-site distribution of the finds, it differs little from the rest of the small-sized clusters. However it occupies a special location in this landscape and it is characterized by pottery finds of an evidently higher quality than on the rest of the sites. This site is situated on the watershed line that separates the drainages of the surveyed basin and the small stream to the east. It overlooks both basins and stands by the main local road that links the mountain with the foothills.

As can be noticed the distances between neighbouring sites are surprisingly small. Even when joining pairs of small and medium-sized or large clusters into single installations, the distances between neighboring sites rarely exceed 250 meters. And if the cluster on grid 8 is treated as a residential site with a site area larger than that revealed by the grid survey, the distances between neighbouring sites become even shorter, especially on the upper portions of the eastern ridge. Comparing these distances with those recorded by larger regional projects they are indeed unusually small, although there are examples of similarly spaced rural sites[409]. Large rural villas are also known to be accompanied by less substantial outbuildings, situated not more than 250-300 meters from the main residential complex, but in the case of Skopian Montenegro we lack such a complex in the immediate surroundings[410]. We'll return to the possible socio-historical interpretations of this network in the concluding section to this chapter. It was first necessary to offer a coherent interpretation of the extent and the structure of individual sites.

Understandably it is quite possible that this extensive network spreads beyond the limits of the survey area. More clusters can be expected, especially on the slopes southeast of the clusters on grids 10 and 26, as well as on the slopes north of the sites on grids 14 and 27. It is less likely that the settlement extended over to the much steeper eastern slopes, into the drainage of the neighbouring stream on the east. In all probability the small fortification discovered 170 meters northeast of the site on grid 14 was at least partly contemporary with this network of farmsteads and hamlets. If this was truly the case, it could very well mark the northeast limit of the settlement. As in the first survey area and in many other regions in the country, fortifications are inseparable components of the countryside in the Roman Period. Apart from their obvious relation with local and regional roads, we saw that they also often mark the borders of micro-regions. The absence of material on the surface of the fortified area prevents us from chronologically relating the fort with the rest of the Roman sites in the survey area. Yet the very

[409] Most prominently in South Etruria where small farms can appear at distances of less than 300 meters, T. Potter, 125, 1979; H. Goodchild, *Modeling Roman Agricultural Production in the Middle Tiber Valley, Central Italy*, 2007 unpublished PhD thesis, especially tab 3.7 for distances between Early Imperial sites recorded by the South Etruria survey.

[410] There are close examples from a rural survey in north Bulgaria, in the hinterland of Nicopolis ad Istrum, A.G. Poulter, Site-specific field survey: the Methodology, 583-595, ed. A.G. Poulter, 2007.

position of this fort and its obvious topographic relatedness to the slopes of the eastern ridge suggests that it formed a constituent part of this complex, dispersed settlement. Although lacking in strong defensive qualities, it could still act as a place of refuge for the local community and its livestock. At the same time it could've been used as a small station along the main local road that follows the crest of the eastern ridge. Both the fortification and the site on grid 3 are aligned along this natural route.

Because of the incomplete data, but mostly because of the dispersed character of the settlement, it is rather difficult to estimate the total area occupied by domestic sites. Summing up the areas of all domestic clusters revealed by the grid survey, it turns out that the integral settlement measured at least 2.2 hectares. This figure doesn't include the three possible clusters on field blocks 47a-b, 49-50, 66; 289a-291a and 394, as well as the problematic site on grid 8. Assuming that all three sites were made up of domestic assemblages and that they rank as small to medium or medium-sized clusters, the size of the occupied area will increase to over 3 hectares. Settlements of such size are usually ranked as small to medium-size villages, consisting of between 30 and 50 households. This is not disproportional to the size and the character of the surveyed terrain. In terms of spaciousness and fertile land, it certainly offers a greater potential than the rugged environs of Sopot. But there are at least two uncertainties surrounding this straightforward estimate. First, we don't know if this group of sites forms an integral network, a single dispersed settlement or if they are just a segment of a much more extensive network of individual farms, dispersed across the entire plain. Knowing that there are no traces of occupation from the Roman Period in the western half of the survey, the former seems more likely, though it is possible that the network extended beyond the northern and the southeastern limits of the survey. The presence of the small fort at the top of the eastern ridge overseeing the entire network of farms, further unites the scattered estates into a single, integral settlement. The second uncertainty is related to the exact character of the various clusters that comprise this network. On all except three of the discovered clusters, the material collected formed domestic assemblages, but it is uncertain if the medium and large-sized clusters present the remains of larger, individual farms or if they are agglomerations of several or a dozen dwellings. In other words, it is difficult to decide which of the variously ranked clusters present basic settlement units and what they actually represent in socio-historical terms.

Assuming that only the medium and large-sized clusters represent separate estates and that the small and small to medium sites are the remains of subsidiary buildings wouldn't decrease significantly the total settlement area, but it would obviously decrease the number of households. This implies that the entire complex was comprised of individual or pairs of farms, surrounded by subsidiary buildings and their agricultural fields. The variations in the size and the structure of the revealed clusters could actually be related to the size of the group inhabiting a single estate or more likely, it could simply reflect the wealth of individual households and the number of subsidiary buildings. In such a case the entire network consists of not more than a dozen farmsteads, including the two possible clusters revealed by the transect survey and the potential few clusters outside the survey limits. Judging by the on-site distribution patterns, this is a more likely interpretation than the one assuming that each cluster represents a smaller agglomeration of individual dwellings. The majority of the sites had a single core; multiple cores were only recorded on grids 2, 15 and 17. Moreover these cores were in fact larger concentrations of architectural ceramics, possibly indicating the location of roofed structures[411].

[411] J. Bintliff, P. Howard, A. Snodgrass, 2007; interpretation of individual sites in chapter 6 and in a greater detail, in Appendix A.

On the majority of the single-core sites, there was a clear spatial differentiation between the fragments of pottery and architectural ceramics. If the discovered surface clusters were agglomerations of at least several separate dwellings, one would expect to see a more even distribution of the various functional categories and multiple site cores. The electric resistivity survey on similar sites in the hinterland of Nicopolis ad Istrum in northern Bulgaria has shown that they mostly consist of one central and larger building surrounded by less substantial and smaller outbuildings[412].

There are two problems with this reading of the surface record. Some of the small or small to medium-sized clusters, such as those on grids 6 and 7 are characterized by full domestic assemblages and very high concentrations of surface material, although architectural ceramics is present in smaller amounts than on other clusters. But in general on these bases, they are undistinguishable from their medium or large-sized neighbours. If these are the remains of subsidiary, non-residential outbuildings, it becomes difficult to explain the strong presence of plain domestic fabrics and the fragments of cooking pots. But at the same time being so much smaller than the large-sized clusters, it is hardly tenable to claim that they are simply smaller and humbler versions of the supposed larger estates represented by medium and large-sized clusters. Either they are subsidiary structures of an unknown function or the larger and medium-sized clusters are actually agglomerations of several separate dwellings, each measuring between 500 and 1000 sq meters. It is possible that they are not the remains of building structures but the remains of middens or refuse pits, though in such a case the size and the density of the clusters is rather confusing.

One should finally allow the possibility that the discovered clusters are not at all farming estates, but the winter camps of pastoralists[413]. As discussed in chapter IV, in later periods herding was an important component in the local economy. To be sure like in most other regions of the country, the local economies were mixed. We'll see that the later agro-pastoralist communities carefully avoided locating the winter-camps across prime cultivable land. But in the exceptional conditions created by the founding of Scupi, the relatively large market it provided and the peculiar agrarian arrangements, it isn't impossible that there developed settlements or estates with highly specialized production[414]. Again judging by the results of ethno-archaeological research, pastoral communities leave very little ceramic material or are completely aceramic[415]. It is highly unlikely that purely pastoralist sites would produce such amounts of architectural ceramics and fairly extensive site halos.

V.4 The Late Roman Period, 4th-6th century AD (tables 23-24, graph 22, Appendix 4)

We have already pointed to the possibility that a portion of the fabric groups broadly determined as Roman or possibly even the entire assemblages belongs to the first half of the

[412] A. G. Poulter, fig 2, ed. A.G. Poulter, 2007; M.J. Boyd, Geophysical survey and rural settlement architecture on the Lower Danube at the transition to Late Antiquity, 597-609, the same volume; a pattern that seemingly matches the findings of the Skopian Montenegro survey; although as we'll see there are some notable differences.

[413] A suggestion made by Prof. M. Pasquinucci, for which I'm most thankful. In both survey areas the interpretation of the results was largely shaped from a farmer's perspective.

[414] J. L. Bintliff, Going to market in Antiquity, 209-250, eds. E. Olshausen, H. Sonnabend, *Zu Wasser und zu Land*, Stuttgarter Kolloquium 7, Stuttgart 2002.

[415] C. Chang, P.A. Tourtellote, Ethnoarchaeological survey of pastoral transhumance sites in the Grevena Region, Greece, 249-264, *Journal of Field Archaeology* 20-3, 1993.

4th century AD. It is nevertheless clear that the pottery production characteristic for the period of the late 4th-late 6th century is absent from the collected assemblages. This is a far more familiar material, known from a number of excavated sites and most relevant for the survey area, from Scupi[416]. The typical shapes and decorative techniques found in the Late Antique layers of the colony are almost completely absent from the surface collections. This is in accord with the chronology known from the great majority of open, agricultural estates in the central Balkans[417]. The few excavated farms or villas in the southern regions of the country were abandoned by the late 4th century AD, at the latest[418]. Most of the excavated villa complexes in neighboring Bulgaria, if not transformed into a nucleated settlement were also deserted by the late 4th century[419].

According to the survey record, there were radical changes in the surveyed basin even prior to the decline of Scupi. Excluding finds possibly datable to the 4th century AD, almost entirely limited to the cluster on grid 3, Late Roman material comprises only about 1.20% of all gathered finds (table 23, Appendix IV). The small collection datable to the Late Roman Period numbered 138 fragments. Because the great majority of the discarded finds either dated to the Roman or to the Late Ottoman-Early Modern periods, their percentage in the total surface record is even lower. This small amount of surface material was collected from about 50 field blocks dispersed across all survey sections. There is nevertheless a visible concentration of field blocks featuring at least 0.5 fragments per 1000 sq meters in the northern half of the western ridge and in the central survey section, along the Skopje-Kučevište road (map V_23a). But unlike other historical periods represented with settlement remains in the surface record, the difference between field units featuring maximal and minimal densities is negligible. The maximum densities of about 4 fragments per 1000 sq meters recorded towards the northern periphery of the survey area and on the top of the western ridge are repeated on field blocks on the eastern ridge and in the southern half of the survey. In the northwest quarter of the survey area field blocks featuring over 3 fragments per 1000 sq meters are usually accompanied by at least one field unit featuring between 1 and 3 fragments per 1000 sq meters. In the southern survey half or on the eastern ridge, field blocks featuring around 3 fragments per 1000 sq meters often stand isolated. This is the main difference between the various survey sections. In other words, the thin carpet of Late Roman finds is becoming slightly denser on the central parts of the western ridge and in the northern half of the basin floor, while the maximum artifact density remains stable across the survey area. In fact because of the low numbers, it was argued that even these slight differences are artificially enhanced by the variable size of the field blocks. Focusing on the number of collected finds per field blocks, the differences are even less significant. In principle the transect collections included not more than 2 Late Roman shards per field block (map V_23b).

As explained in Appendix IV, more extensive zones of elevated density of Late Roman finds were discovered on field blocks 212a-218a in the central part of the western ridge and on two pairs of field units further north, along the top of the ridge. In the northern end of the central survey sections, larger quantities of Late Roman finds were discovered on field blocks 126, 129,

[416] M. Ončevska-Todorovska, 2004.

[417] L. Mulvin, Late Roman villa plans: the Danube-Balkan Region 377-413, eds.W. Bowden, L. Lavan, C. Machado, *Recent research on the Late Antique countryside*, Leiden 2004; A.G. Poulter,Cataclysm on the Lower Danube: The destruction of a complex Roman landscape, 223-254, ed. N. Christie, *Landscapes of change: Rural evolutions in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, Ashgate 2004.

[418] I. Mikulčić, Edna anticka villa rustica vo Tikveš 269-285, *Godišen Zbornik na Filozofski Fakultet* 23, 1971; K. Kepeski, Villa Rustica vo Pešterica kaj Prilep 143-156, *Macedoniae Acta Archaeologica* 2, 1976

[419] V. Dinčev, *Rimskite vili v dneshnata b'lgarska teritoria*, Sofia 1997, 18-20.

137 and 274a. These are not contingent field units, but they form closely spaced groups, stretching over the entire northern half of the central survey section. On the eastern ridge and into the southern survey half, field blocks featuring over 1 fragment per 1000 sq meters are much more isolated. Evidently the extensive network of farms in the eastern survey sector was abandoned after the 4th century AD. On the majority of the field blocks where we recorded larger concentration of Roman material, the Late Roman finds were either completely absent or present in very small quantities. The only exception is the group of field blocks 123-124, 137 partly covered by grids 15-18, on which we discovered one of the largest Roman sites in the second survey.

There aren't any major changes in the overall pattern of distribution when the transect collections are adjusted to represent 100% of the material counted (map V_23c). In fact this operation only deepens the pattern described in the preceding paragraph. The zones of increased artifact density in the central top section of the western ridge and in the northern half of the central survey sections become slightly more compact and better defined against their backgrounds. At the same time, the isolated peaks in the southern half of the central survey section and on the eastern ridge now appear thinner, further emphasizing the increase in the northwest quarter of the survey area.

To a certain degree these results were confirmed by the total collections, though only in a few cases did the regular grid survey accidentally include field units featuring higher density of Late Roman finds. On field blocks 129 and 137 covered by grids 17 and 18, the total collections by regular grids truly revealed more compact and extensive scatters of Late Roman material (map V_24). A thin, patchy carpet featuring slightly over 1 fragment per 100 sq meters covers larger portions of the gridded areas, although the very low density and the lack of focus clearly suggested that this is a segment of an off-site carpet. On field block 302 on the lower terraces of the eastern ridge and featuring 3 fragments per 1000 sq meters of transect survey, the total collections included but a pair of Late Roman shards. Similarly on the top of the western ridge, the total survey on grid 22 partly covering the large group of field blocks 212a-218a collected only a few fragments, randomly dispersed across the gridded area. In fact the situation recorded on grid 22 is almost identical to the total survey records on grids 21 and 23-24, covering field blocks where the transect collections didn't include Late Roman finds.

Small quantities of pottery were collected from the majority of the grids in the survey area, even on field blocks where the transect survey didn't record Late Roman material. In fact the maximum density of 2.65 fragments was collected from grid 12, from a field block where the transect collections indicated a complete absence of the Late Roman material. The Late Roman finds were totally absent only among the collections from grids 5-11, 14, 20 and 26. In this respect the transect survey record was confirmed, because these sterile stretches are entirely limited to the eastern ridge (grids 14, 5-11 and 26) and in the southern half of the central survey section (grid 20). On the rest of the gridded areas, this material comprised between 1 and 5% of the total collections. As on grids 17 and 18 a handful of Late Roman finds were usually found dispersed in thin scatters across the gridded area. Only on grids 12 and 17 did the maximum density exceed the limit of 1.3 fragments per 100 sq meters. Most commonly the artifact density ranged between 0 and 1.3 fragments per 100 sq meters or in absolute terms, between 0 and 2 fragments per grid unit. Even on grid 4 where we suspected the presence of a more significant concentration, the artifact densities were below 1.3 fragments per 100 sq meters. In principle the pattern revealed by the regular grid survey consists of tiny scatters or even single finds separated by fairly large sterile intervals. This sparse carpet of Late Roman material is strikingly similar to

the distribution of the Roman finds in the "farther" off-site or to the Roman-Late Roman off-site in the first survey area.

It is unlikely that the tiny concentrations revealed on grids 12 or 17 represent even less intensive non-residential activities, although one can never exclude that some of these scatters are derived from ephemeral phenomena such as pits, isolated burials or even agricultural huts lacking tiled roofs. As was shown, such fluctuations are not unparalleled among the off-site scatters of Roman material and they are also characteristic for the material from later historical periods. Not only the very low artifact densities, but also the character of the gathered material indicates that there are no residential sites datable to the Late Roman Period in the second survey area. The most telling signs are the very small percentage of architectural ceramics datable to this period and the actual absence of an integral ceramic assemblage. Over 80% of the collected material consisted of a single fabric group. Tile fabrics different from those accompanying the rest of the Roman material appear only on one location, on grid 4. They have thinner cross-sections and simple decorative patterns typical for the Late Roman Period. As they appear concentrated on two grid units in the northern half of grid 4, it is indeed possible that this scatter of tiles is the remains of a small, non-residential structure. However they weren't accompanied by pottery finds and the few fragments of tile barely gave a maximum density of 1 fragment per 100 sq meters. Apart from fragments of transport and storage vessels, there were no fragments of coarse ware datable to this period. It is possible that some of the fabric groups that were part of the Roman assemblages continued to be used into the Late Roman Period and the same can be argued for some of the brick and tile fabrics. This will probably increase the overall amount of the Late Roman material resulting in a denser off-site carpet, but it wouldn't change the fact that the old network of farms was completely deserted.

This implies however that the sparse carpet of Late Roman material must have originated from elsewhere, in all likelihood not far away from the survey limits. Analyzing the distribution of the Late Roman finds by field blocks, we observed an apparent increase towards the northern end of the central section and on the central top portion of the western ridge. Initially this suggested that the density of the Late Roman material gradually increased both along the south-north and the east-west axis. But comparing the average densities recorded by grids covering various parts of the survey area, this linear trend was confirmed only for the central survey section. Here both the transect and the grid survey indicate a visible increase towards the northern survey limit; as mentioned the most extensive and compact scatters of Late Roman finds were collected from grids 17 and 18. On the western ridge the increase in the density of the Late Roman finds was limited to the central parts of the section and Late Roman finds were only slightly more numerous than on the eastern ridge. It is possible that the failure to document larger quantities of Late Roman finds in the northern half of the western ridge is related to the small coverage of the grid survey and the fact that most of the gridded area included field blocks on which the transect survey didn't record Late Roman material. It is in any instance evident that there lacked a continuous carpet as in the northern half of the central section.

If these records are accurate, it is most logical to locate the possible settlement that generated this off-site carpet not far beyond the northern limits of the survey area, on the slopes leading towards Kučevište. In fact the chapel of St. Paraskeva, just outside the northern limits of the survey could even mark the approximate location of the Late Roman settlement (map V_24). It is situated only about 50 meters away from the northernmost pair of field blocks in the central survey section. Indeed it isn't unusual to find Christian chapels erected over Late Roman settlements, both during the Middle Age and later historical periods. In such a case however, the

absence of Late Roman finds from blocks 140 and 155 immediately to the south of the chapel is somewhat problematic. Field block 155 was discovered fallow and sterile, but on field block 140 not a single Late Roman shard was collected, although almost 50% of the counted material was gathered.

Judging by the extent of the off-site, this hypothetical Late Roman settlement must have been larger than the farmsteads of the previous period. Focusing only on the northwest quarter of the survey area where the transect collections indicated an increased artifact density, the maximum extent of this zone is about 680 meters, measured from the small chapel to field block 218a on the central portion the western ridge. Along the Skopje-Kučevište asphalt road it extends for over 500 meters. According to some studies off-site carpets of such extents could be produced by hamlets or small villages. Indeed going back to the first survey area, we may recall that the small hamlets were usually surrounded by impact zones with similar radii.

V.5 The Middle and Late Byzantine Period (early 10th-early 14th century; tables 25-26, graph 23, Appendix IV)

The finds possibly datable to the Middle Ages form a very small collection, including but a few feature shards. They all consist of simple strap handles, flat bases and fragments with a low ridge running along the line of maximum diameter. Lacking more diagnostic examples, the collection can only be roughly dated between the 10th and the early 14th century. It comprised a distinct group of fabrics, limited exclusively to a small number of field units. It is significant that it doesn't accompany finds datable to the late 14th or the Early Ottoman Period, which were found dispersed over a larger portion of the surveyed terrain. Because of the absence of clearly recognizable shapes and decorative techniques, the proposed dating should be accepted with reserves. In principle these simple shapes could date anywhere between the Late Roman and the Early Ottoman Period. The only reason for analyzing them separately is the fact that they appear limited to a single location and never accompany finds datable to the Late Roman or the Early Ottoman Period.

In total only 85 fragments constitute this ceramic assemblage. They comprise 0.75% of all material studied and their share in the total surface record is certainly lower than 0.5% (table 25, Appendix IV). They were collected from 7 field units, all situated within a radius of 150 meters in the northwest corner of the survey, on the upper portions and the top of the western ridge. The pattern revealed by the transect survey is clear and it isn't affected by the inconsistencies in the size of the field blocks' areas and in the collections by transect units (maps V_25a and 25b). The greatest and the most extensive concentration of finds datable to the Middle Ages was revealed on a group of 4 contingent field blocks situated on the top of the western ridge, about 320 meters south-southwest from the monastic chapel dedicated to St. Paraskeva. From north to south these include field block 171, 170, 186 and 188 (table 26, Appendix IV). By far the highest artifact density was recorded on field block 171. The core of this cluster was evidently on this field unit, featuring nearly 18 fragments per 1000 sq meters of transect survey. To the south there is a sharp decline on field blocks 170 and 186 with about 3 fragments per 1000 sq meters. After about 50 meters from the southern edge of field block 170, there is another peak on field block 188, where artifact density increases to almost 6 fragments per 1000 sq meters. Finds datable to the Middle Ages disappear from the surface record on the surrounding field units. This material was present only on field block 167 situated immediately northwest of field block 171 and on field blocks 183 and 158, 100 to 150 meters to the west and

north of the main group. With low artifact densities ranging between 1.8 and 3 fragments per 1000 sq meters, they mark the impact zone of the possible Medieval site. Understandably adjusting the transect collections to represent 100% of the material counted the density increases on all of these field units, but the increment is fairly proportional and doesn't affect the pattern revealed by the "raw" record of the transect survey.

The total survey by regular grid units confirmed the transect survey record (map V_26). It managed to define more precisely the northern and eastern limits of the site, although it failed to reveal its very edge on the south and west. This is a compact, though irregularly shaped cluster with a possible extension on the western side. It is defined by artifact densities of about 2.5-3 fragments per 100 sq meters, recorded both along the northern and southern periphery. To the west and northeast, the decline is slightly sharper. On the site core the maximum density is relatively low. The total grid survey recorded slightly over 7.5 fragments per 100 sq meters in the centre of grid 25. This low contrast between the maximum and the minimum density, along with the low quality of the material explains why it proved difficult to document the entire site area by a regular grid survey. We encountered the same problem on certain sites from the Roman Period, most prominently the clusters on grids 5-11 and 26. It is impossible to decide where to limit the grid survey during fieldwork, by simply looking at the surface. Allowing for wider southern and western margins, the possible Medieval site measures 1500 sq meters.

Based on the detailed analysis of the transect collections we argued that there was another, smaller core on field block 188, although it remains uncertain if it was a physically separate cluster or if it was related to the cluster on grid 25 through a zone of lower artifact density. This peripheral zone is characterized by an artifact density ranging between 1 and 2 shards per 100 sq meters. It was revealed along the northern and eastern site limits and it is very likely that similar total amounts contribute to the increased density on field blocks 183 and 168, situated north and west of the main cluster. Thus the collection of finds possibly datable to the Middle Age forms a cluster that features a roughly concentric distribution pattern, with a high on-site concentration surrounded by an intermediary zone of lower artifact density separating the on-site from the off-site. As we saw during the description of the Roman sites, the pattern is almost never perfectly concentric; rather the main cluster was surrounded by a number of smaller and thinner satellite clusters, separated by zones of very low or zero artifact density.

Taken together, the two clusters measure between 2000 and 2500 sq meters. Similarly sized clusters of Roman material were interpreted as the remains of individual or pairs of farms. Lacking archaeological data for the rural settlements from this period, one can only speculate about the actual character of the discovered site. There is the same dilemma of whether we're dealing with isolated agricultural estates or a cluster of smaller dwellings. In any case the very size of the possible Medieval cluster doesn't allow for more than a few small or a single extended family. Not insignificantly it repeats the size of the medium-sized Roman sites. This indicates that during certain time-periods there was a preference for small settlement units, existing isolated or as a part of an extensive network spread across the foothills. It is almost the antipode of the Late Ottoman and Early Modern settlement pattern, with relatively large nucleated settlements, situated kilometers away from their agricultural fields

The small site on grid 25 occupies a rather exposed location, much more similar to the locations of the Roman farms on the eastern ridge. The Medieval farm is situated on the top of the slightly lower, western ridge, opposite the Roman site uncovered on grids 1 and 2 and roughly at the same height of about 510 meters above the sea. The nearest active freshwater spring is on the floor of the neighbouring valley on the west, about 600 meters away. Compared

to its eastern neighbour, the western ridge has a drier appearance. There lacks the small groves or the lush stretches that separate the agricultural fields in the eastern half of the survey. The western ridge has a steeper eastern slope. Communication between its crest and the floor of the surveyed basin is difficult and at certain places impossible. In fact the Medieval farm on grid 25 is more orientated towards the floor of the neighbouring basin on the west than towards the surveyed area. The western slopes of the western ridge are much gentler and in this respect the two ridges covered by the survey area are very similarly shaped. Being drier and less communicable, the western ridge is slightly disadvantaged as a settlement location. To the north it leads directly to Kučevište, but to the south it ties onto a chain of low hills, which terminates in a dead-end, about 2 kilometers south of the surveyed area with the isolated hillock Čavrnjak. This circumstance explains why the modern asphalt road between Kučevište and Skopje follows the floor of the basin, rather than the top of the ridge. In the past Kučevište was accessed via the road along the eastern ridge of the surveyed basin or via the road that comes from Mirkovci. The implication is that the small Medieval farm stood isolated, hundreds of meters away from the main local roads. It communicates with the rest of the wider study region only through the head of the western ridge, through the location occupied by the modern village Kučevište. Perhaps the large area occupied by the village houses truly hides the remains of a larger nucleated settlement, contemporary with the discovered farm.

In this same context of viewing the small Medieval site as a satellite of a hypothetical nucleated settlement, it is possible to argue that these are the remains of a non-residential site. Indeed in the immediate surrounding of the Late Ottoman-Early Modern village, one can still see the fading remains of sheepfolds. Until several decades ago they were used as winter-camps for the herds. However these are rather humble constructions, usually positioned on the barren mountain slopes not in the midst of the arable zone. These were simple animal sheds not intended for human habitation. The possible Medieval collection on the other hand comprised a small, but full domestic assemblage. Moreover like the majority of the Roman sites in the second survey area, it generated a relatively extensive halo, spreading for almost 50 meters to the south of the site. If the isolated concentrations on field blocks to the north and west are included, the maximum halo radius would extend for nearly 150 meters measured from the northern edge of the site. In terms of hectares the halo zone occupies between 0.5 and 1 hectare. This is considerably smaller than the halos of similarly sized Roman sites, though knowing the small size of the ceramic assemblages typically encountered on Medieval sites, this is hardly surprising[420]. The presence of a full domestic assemblage and of a fairly extensive halo unambiguously point to the residential character of this site.

V.6 The Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman Period (late 14th- early 18th century; table 27, graph 24, Appendix 4)

Although better known than earlier Medieval pottery, the material from these centuries has received inadequate attention by archaeologists working in this region[421]. Pottery production from this period is closely related to earlier traditions, but it also features a number of characteristics that set it apart from earlier Byzantine pottery, as well as from the ceramics dated to the 18th and 19th centuries. Lead glaze applied over a poorly fused white slip or *engobe* and the

[420] A. K. Vionis, 571-572, J.L. Bintliff et al. 541-606, 2004-2005.
[421] B. Babić, 163-164, 1967.

characteristic wet-wash finish are among the most easily recognizable features[422]. Again the closest parallels come from the material excavated during the past several years from the Skopje citadel.

That there lacked settlement traces dating to the Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman Period is indicated by both the statistical and the spatial distribution of the material. Finds datable to this period comprise slightly over 2% of the collection studied and only about 1% of the total surface record. The collection consists of about 245 fragments distributed over 85 field blocks, across various portions of the survey area (table 27, Appendix IV). Because of the fairly large dispersal area, even the district average values present insignificantly low thresholds. Being more numerous, the Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman assemblage exhibits a greater variation in artifact density between the field units on which this period was represented in the transect collections. But this fact doesn't diminishes the relatively small differences between the minimum and maximum densities recorded by the transect or the grid survey. The maximums of 10 fragments per 1000 sq meters of transect and 3.1 fragments per 100 sq meters of grid survey are simply too low to represent anything but off-site or heavily truncated, vestigial remains. Even when the transect collections are adjusted to represent 100% of the material counted, the maximum density predicted barely exceeds 26 fragments per 1000 sq meters. In this respect the collection of the Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman finds resembles the Late Roman collection, the basic difference being that it is twice as large, forming a slightly denser carpet.

The spatial distribution of this material is also strikingly similar to the distribution of the Late Roman finds (map V_27a). Over 50% of the field units on which the transect survey recorded finds datable to the Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Period are concentrated in the northwest corner of the survey area. Into the southern half of the survey area and on the slopes of the eastern ridge, the carpet of Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman finds becomes evidently sparser. Along the eastern and southern limits of the survey, there are but isolated field units featuring artifact densities not higher than 1.5 shards per 1000 sq meters. For example field blocks 385, 368a and 327 feature between 2.4 and 4.4 fragments per 1000 sq meters, but they are separated by large empty stretches. On the other hand in the northwest corner of the survey, we see groups of four or five contingent field walking units featuring not much higher density of Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman pottery, although on certain isolated units the transect survey recorded over 10 fragments per 1000 sq meters, such as field block 168. In absolute terms these are evidently low values, but the figure itself isn't decisive in determining the off-site character of the Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman scatter. As always this is determined by the relatively small difference between the zones of high and low artifact density, which contributes to the absence of a clear focus or foci.

Thus the larger concentration on field block 168 and on the four neighboruing field blocks to the east is repeated on a number of other field blocks in the northern half of the western ridge and on the basin floor. Admittedly the maximum of slightly over 10 fragments per 1000 sq meters isn't reached, but the artifact density is still above the threshold of 2 fragments per 1000 sq meters. If this is taken as a provisional on-site threshold, it follows that there was a network of smaller sites not unlike the network of Roman farms, but with an evident focus on the northwest quarter of the survey area. Technically the only difference between the distribution patterns of the material from these two periods is one of scale. On the hypothetical cores of the clusters of Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman material the artifact density is rarely higher than 2 to 3 times the average value. In the case of the Roman collection by transect units these differences were at

[422] J. Vroom, *Byzantine to Modern Pottery in the Aegean: An Introduction and Field Guide*, Utrecht 2005.

least two or threefold. Furthermore while the carpet of Roman finds was organized in concentric zones around a dozen distinct cores, the clusters of field blocks on which the Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman finds were present appeared suddenly after smaller or larger stretches of sterile surface. As with the Late Roman collection, the carpet was becoming denser towards the northwest survey quarter, while the district maximum and average values remain fairly stable or only slightly increased. The carpet of Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman finds lacks one of the basic features of settlement sites and this is their more or less concentric pattern of distribution.

Two potential biases distort the transect survey record: the variable size of the field block as a basic quantitative unit and the inconsistencies in the individual transect collections. As shown in Appendix IV, these two factors are particularly potent in the northwest survey quarter; the survey sections which according to the transect collections feature the highest density of Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman finds. The field blocks in the northern half of the western ridge are on average smaller than the field blocks in other survey section, which directly enhances their artifact density. When field blocks are compared by the number of collected finds, the differences are far less significant, as in principle each field block gave between 1 and 5 fragments. Even when featuring a single fragment datable to the Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman Period, a smaller field unit will be ranked higher than a larger field unit on which the transect collections included 2 Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman shards. In addition the field blocks in the northern half of the western ridge were more thoroughly transected, the transect collections regularly including over 50% of the material counted. In other survey sections especially the northern halves of the central section and the eastern ridge, the transect collections were less intensive and often included less than 40% of the counted finds. Assuming that all counted material was collected, the northern half of the western ridge loses its prominence (map V_27b). On certain field units in the northern half of the central survey section such as field blocks 97b and 134, the artifact density could theoretically increase to over 20 fragments per 1000 sq meters. In fact the maximum density recorded by the transect survey moves from field block 168 to field block 134 in the central survey section, with over 26 fragments per 1000 sq meters. To be sure, the artifact density on the field blocks in the northern half of the western ridge also increases. Although the increase is more gradual than on certain field blocks in the central survey section, these field units continue to rank high in terms of artifact density. Most significantly the assumed cluster of field blocks centered on field block 168 loses its significance as larger and denser “clusters” appear in the central parts of the ridge or in the northern half of the central survey section.

On the field blocks from the rest of the survey sections, the effects of these factors are far gentler and the overall pattern described in the preceding paragraph persists. What this analysis corrected was the apparent concentration of finds in the northern half of the western ridge. It now becomes clear that there were roughly equal or perhaps even larger quantities of Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman material in the northern half of the central survey section. As we will see this was confirmed by the total grid surveys.

We were lucky that a number of field blocks featuring artifact densities higher than the threshold of 2 fragments per 1000 sq meters of transect survey were inadvertently included in the regular grid survey (map V_28a). After all, a total grid survey is the most straightforward way of deciding if an increased density represents genuine archaeological remains or a patchy off-site carpet. The total collections by regular grid units covered the greater portion of the hypothetical cluster of field blocks 168-172, though it missed the core on field block 168 (map V_28b). It further included a number of field blocks where artifact density could theoretically increase to

over 10 fragments per 1000 sq meters. These include field blocks 129 and 134 (grids 17 and 18) and field block 212a, covered by grid 22. After the study of the total collections, the absence of settlement remains or even the remains of less intensive, non-residential activities was confirmed. Even on grids covering the field blocks ranked higher than the average on the basis of the transect survey records, the maximal artifact density never exceeded the limit of 2 fragments per 100 sq meters. In fact on certain grids such as grid 22 or 1, the maximum densities were lower than those predicted on the basis of the transect survey record and not much higher than the selective transect collections. Recall that this was also the case with the Late Roman collection but also with the Roman material in the off-site zone. Outside the zones of on-site densities the discrepancies between the transect and the grid survey records are considerably diminished.

Apart from grid 22, the only other more significant discrepancy between the transect and the regular grid survey was on grid 19 covering field block 263. Here although the transect collections didn't include Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman finds, the total grid collections recorded the highest artifact density of 3.1 shards per 100 sq meters. In the case of this field unit, there were also considerable discrepancies concerning the presence of Roman finds, which must be related to the less thorough transect collections but also to the very low quality and obtrusiveness of the finds. Nevertheless even the maximum densities of 3.1 fragments per 100 sq meters recorded on two contingent grid units in the centre of the grid are not sufficient to elevate this collection to an on-site status. The range between the minimum and maximum density remains extremely low, while on a micro-level the "clusters" revealed on grids 19, 16-17 or 25 completely lack an inner structure. They are randomly scattered across the gridded area, the artifact density fluctuating between 0 and 2 fragments per 100 sq meters (map V_28a). In fact the pattern revealed by the transect survey is repeated on a micro-level: the carpet becomes slightly denser on certain grids while the maximum density remains stable. When dealing with carpets of surface material that lack a visible focus, the average density recorded per gridded area is a far more sensitive index of the changes across larger survey sections. However these data must be seen as a complementary to the record of the transect survey and not as its ultimate test. As argued in the appendix and in a previous section, the gridded areas are not necessarily representative of the entire survey sections.

On the surface, the overall distribution of the Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman finds by grids is quite similar to the distribution pattern of the Late Roman finds (cf. graphs 22 and 24, Appendix IV). In both cases we see two significant disagreements with the transect survey record: field blocks in the northern half of the central survey section feature artifact densities much higher than fields on the western ridge and the difference between the densities on grids covering portions of the eastern and the western ridge are much lower than indicated by the transect survey. On grids 17 and 19, the average density reaches over 5 and nearly 10 fragments per 1000 sq meters. Only on grid 25 does the average density come close with about 2.5 fragments per 1000 sq meters, but in this case the increase is uncertain because the Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman collections includes a fabric group that could equally belong the earlier Medieval assemblage. Excluding this category would lower the artifact density on grid 25 to only slightly over 2 fragments per 1000 sq meters. On the rest of the grids including those covering parts of the central survey section (grid 18, 20), the average density never exceeds 2 fragments per 1000 sq meters. As with the Late Roman collection, it is difficult to observe a clear linear tendency. In the central survey section the main concentration is not located by the northern survey limit, but on grid 19 towards the centre of the survey area and on both the

eastern and the western ridge there is a subtle increase along a south-north axis. Finally, the total grid collections confirmed the higher density on the western ridge, although the increase from the eastern ridge is much lower than expected.

Thus the grid survey record draws a slightly different pattern of distribution from the one indicated by the transect survey. The density of Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman finds in the northern half of the central survey section is not merely equal to that recorded on the northern half of the western ridge, but on certain field blocks it is much higher. On the other hand the differences in artifact densities between the eastern and the western ridge are hardly as prominent as suggested by the transect survey. We believe however that this comparison doesn't cancel the observations made on the basis of the transect survey records. Understandably the average densities by individual grids chiefly reflect local conditions and can hardly depict an overall linear tendency. Indeed if we estimate the average density on the total of gridded areas by various survey sections, the differences are gentler, although the overall pattern remains unchanged. There is a higher concentration of Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman finds in the central survey section and this doesn't have to be related to the fragmented character of the finds and ultimately to the fact that the fields in this part of the survey area were often finely harrowed. We suggested this interpretation because the grid surveys in the central survey sections recorded higher off-site values not only for the Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman and the Late Roman periods, but also for the off-site carpet of Roman finds. However this same argument can be used in favor of the view that the off-site carpet on the fields on the floor of the surveyed basin was truly denser and accumulated over at least three different time-periods. This shouldn't come as a surprise knowing that this is probably the most fertile and intensely cultivated part of the survey area. This is actually indicated by the present-day land use, with the numerous gardens and orchards aligned by the Skopje-Kučevište asphalt road.

The off-site character of the Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman scatters is to a certain degree reflected by the lack of a complete ceramic assemblage. The great majority of the finds belonged to fabric groups classed as fine pottery, but it is possible that some of these fabrics were used for storage or transport. Unlike contemporary pottery from the Sopot survey, there were at least three fabric groups that could be related with cooking and food preparation including the characteristic type of bread-baking pans or tzrepna. Needless to say, the dating of this pottery is far from certain[423]. The most numerous of these fabric groups finds parallels among the material excavated from the Late Ottoman-Early Modern deposits on the Skopje citadel. This group alone consists of over 550 shards, more than twice the entire collection of finds dated to the Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Period from Skopian Montenegro. Only about a dozen fragments belonged to a fabric group resembling cooking pot fabrics from earlier centuries. For this group direct parallels were found among the material from one of the abandoned villages mentioned in the Early Ottoman censuses, its location still being remembered by the local inhabitants. It is also possible that at least a portion of the tzrepna fragments date prior to the 18th century. Interestingly not a single fragment of this characteristic pottery was collected from grid 25, from the Medieval farmstead. As we discovered during the analysis of the contemporary material from the Sopot survey, there are no fragments of architectural ceramics that could be related to this period. The predominant tile fabrics are found dispersed across the entire survey area, accompanied by other Late Ottoman and Early Modern fabric

[423] B. Ristevski 1044, 2006. B. Babić, 298-306, 1986; R. Carlton, An ethnoarchaeological study of pottery production on the Dalmatian island of Iž, 101-124, eds. J. Chapman et al. *Recent developments in Yugoslav Archaeology*, Oxford 1988.

groups. Like the cooking pot fabrics, each of these groups is at least twice as numerous as the entire collection dated to the Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Period. Because of the problematic chronology some of these fabric groups were left out of the analysis, although it was possible to notionally partition these classes between the Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman and the Late Ottoman-Early Modern periods[424]. This could result in fuller assemblages for the earlier period, but it wouldn't change the overall distribution pattern and the interpretation proposed.

The increase in the amount of the Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman material in the northwest quarter of the survey and in the central survey section in particular points to the nearest possible settlement that generated this off-site carpet. As will be shown, the distribution pattern revealed foreshadows the distribution of the off-site debris discarded during the past couple of centuries. The carpet of Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman finds appears as its more contracted and sparser predecessor. At the same time it deepens the pattern exhibited by the finds dated to the Late Roman Period, which were mostly concentrated along the survey's northern limit. While it isn't impossible that a certain percentage of the Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman material comes from non-residential activities, it is certain that these are not settlement remains but off-site material related to a larger settlement in the nearby vicinity. The most likely candidate is Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Kučevište, either situated beneath its Late Ottoman successor or in its immediate vicinity. This is indicated by the location of the main village church, built sometime in the first half of the 14th century and renewed towards the middle of the 17th century[425]. Kučevište is situated at a roughly equal distance from the survey area as the neighbouring Mirkovci to the west. Both villages lie at a distance of about 1.3 kilometers, but while Kučevište has a direct access via a downwards road, Mirkovci is situated on a slightly lower ground, across the valley of the Kučeviški Stream. Regarding logistics it is clear that the discovered off-site debris originated from Kučevište and not from Mirkovci[426].

Although there is undeniable evidence for settlement displacements in the region during the 18th and the early 19th century, it is evident that the basis for the Late Ottoman and Early Modern settlement pattern was established as early as the 14th century, in all probability prior to the arrival of the Ottomans. The survey actually captured the very periphery of the inner village territory of Kučevište. The gradual faltering of the off-site carpet in the southern half of the survey area roughly draws the limits of the intensely cultivated land. To our surprise individual fragments from this period were collected from field blocks lying at a distance of nearly 2.5 kilometers, measured from the church of the Holy Savior, the core of the Late Medieval and Ottoman Period community. It is very likely that rare, isolated finds from this period can also be expected even on fields beyond the survey's southern limit, but the more intensely cultivated area was limited within a radius of 1.6 kilometers from the centre of the Late Ottoman-Early Modern settlement. According to some researchers, off-site carpets of such an extent appear around major villages or even small towns. This qualification is not necessarily exaggerated regarding the population of Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman Kučevište[427]. It was possibly the largest village in the region of Skopje and one of the largest villages in the country.

[424] Cf. J. Bintliff, P. Howard, A. Snodgrass, 13, 18, 2007; J. F. Cherry, et al. 331-334, 1991.
[425] P. Miljković-Pepek, Crkvata Sv. Spas vo Kučevište, 417-421, eds. V. Mošin et al. 1975.
[426] P. Howard, 111-128, eds. J. Bintliff, P. Howard, A. Snodgrass, 2007.
[427] T.J. Wilkinson, tab.1, 1989.

V.7 The Late Ottoman-Early Modern Period 1800-1950 (table 28, graphs 25-27, Appendix IV)

As explained in the previous chapter, while determining the limits of the survey area we're attempting to avoid the narrower village territories, regularly covered with large amounts of material discarded during the past couple of centuries. But the study of the collected finds proved that the extent of this zone was greatly underestimated. In fact as the analysis in the previous section showed, a larger portion of the surveyed terrain was already part of the narrower territory of Early Ottoman Kučevište. Predictably in comparison to the finds dating to the Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman Period, the volume of Late Ottoman-Early Modern material was many times greater. This was realized by the time of the second year's campaign, but because of the sheer amount of material, the great variety of fabric groups and the seemingly erratic distribution pattern, the fact simply couldn't be accepted without a certain dosage of suspicion. Yet the prolonged study of the fabrics, comparison with the Late Ottoman and Early Modern finds from the Sopot survey and the material from recent excavations on the Skopje citadel removed even the slightest doubt about the dating of these finds. The pottery and the architectural ceramics from this period have never been a research subject in regional archaeology, but they exhibit certain characteristics that distinguish them from earlier ceramic production. The high firing temperatures reflected in the great solidity of the paste and the very frequent use of a poor vitreous glaze applied directly on the surface are among the most apparent features[428].

Almost 6350 fragments or 55% of the studied material could be dated to the Late Ottoman-Early Modern Period (table 28, Appendix IV). If all finds collected by regular grid units are included in the analysis, their number will be nearly doubled and they would have represented approximately 75% of the total surface record. Even this is an underestimate, because it is almost certain that much of the material that was counted but wasn't included in the transect collections also dates to this period. Given the considerable distance from the centre of the traditional village, this was a surprising discovery. Equally baffling were the very high maximum and average densities recorded by both the transect and the grid survey. Comparing these records with those for the material datable to the Roman Period there are hardly any differences, apart from the small ratio between the average densities recorded by the grid and the transect survey. Typically for the more evenly widespread collections, the grid survey average is about 2.5 times the average recorded by the transect survey, corrected for the lesser degree of survey intensity. But at the same time the range between the maximum and the minimum values is slightly higher for the Late Ottoman-Early Modern material when all collected finds are taken into account. Despite the very large dispersal, variations across field blocks can often be quite significant.

Finds datable to the last couple of centuries were discovered on the great majority of the field walking units or more precisely on over 85% of the survey area. The Late Ottoman-Early Modern finds were completely absent only from the surface of field blocks where no surface material was recorded or for which data were missing. Rather intriguingly this material was also completely absent in the transect collections from field blocks 1, 3, 4, 6 and 351 (map V_29a). These field blocks, all situated by the survey's eastern limit were covered by grids 5-11 and 26, on both of which Roman sites were discovered. As was shown earlier in the text, the transect survey records were largely confirmed by the study of the total grid collections. On both locations Roman material represents over 80% of the total surface record. The total collections

[428]J. Vroom, fig. 5.1-5.5, 6.1-6.2, 2005.

from grids 14 and 20 featured very similar chronological profiles. On the fields covered by these grids the carpet of Late Ottoman-Early Modern finds suddenly becomes thinner, although the share of this material in the total collections is slightly higher, representing 20 and 14% of the material studied. In the rest of the transect and grid collections, material dating to the last couple of centuries represented at least 50% of the collected finds. This implies that the distribution of the total surface record was to a large extent determined by the distribution of the Late Ottoman-Early Modern finds. The zones of higher artifact densities recorded by the transect survey were actually zones of higher concentrations of Late Ottoman and Early Modern material. Thanks to this circumstance a large percentage of the field blocks with high artifact density were included in the regular grid survey.

Despite the very large amount, there are absolutely no doubts about the off-site character of the surface material datable to the last couple of centuries. The possible existence of more intense, non-residential activities in the survey area would've hardly gone unnoticed in the earliest ethnographic and travelers' accounts. It is highly unlikely that even non-residential sites such as tombs or chapels, built in the last couple of centuries would simply disappear in the plough-zone, leaving no memory in the local toponomy and oral tradition. The difficulty arises from the fact that there aren't too many other indicators of the off-site character of the Late Ottoman and Early Modern material, inherent to its distribution pattern. While discussing the distribution of the Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman finds, it was remarked that although they are three times more numerous than the material possibly datable to the Middle Age, unlike the latter group they don't represent the remains of intensive, residential activities. This was reflected in the rather small differences between the zones of high and low artifact densities. A similar observation was made on the distribution of the finds datable to the Late Roman Period. In both cases the difference between field blocks featuring very high and very low artifact density was rarely greater than threefold. In the case of the Late Ottoman-Early Modern collections, the difference between field blocks featuring very high and very low artifact densities was in some cases tenfold. Looking at the results of the selective transect collections, field units belonging to the zone of very high artifact density can feature between 17 and 51 fragments per 1000 sq meters, while field units with low artifact density featured between 0.7 and 4 fragments per 1000 sq meters. These contrasts are far greater than the differences in the density of Roman finds recorded in the on-site and off-site zones. Bearing this in mind, it is no wonder that so much time and effort was spent on total grid collections on field blocks where the surface record almost entirely consisted of material datable to the Late Ottoman-Early Modern Period. The sheer quantity of the surface material on field blocks 231-33, 263 or 495 covered by grids 19, 21 and 23 was taken as a clear sign that there were genuine archaeological sites on these fields. But the study of the material confirmed the suspicions already incited at the fieldwork stage. Not only on grids 21-24 covering the southern half of the western ridge, but also on a number of other grids in this survey area the bulk of the surface material dated to the last couple of centuries.

According to the transect survey collections, the highest concentration of this material was in the northwest quarter of the survey area. In this respect the distribution of the finds datable to the last couple of centuries follows the distribution of the off-site carpet from the preceding Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman and the Late Roman periods. There is a gentle decrease on the field blocks in the northern half of the survey section and on the field blocks on the eastern ridge. There are no considerable variations between the northern and the southern half of the eastern ridge, the lower and the upper terraces. It is evident however that the field blocks on

which the transect collections didn't include finds datable to the Late Ottoman-Early Modern Period tend to cluster along the eastern survey limit and on the top of the ridge. In the southern half of the central survey section artifact density remains at the same level. It is actually higher when compared to certain portions of the eastern ridge. But this off-site carpet is most visibly diminished on the southern half of the western ridge, where we see the largest number of sterile field units. In this survey section the decrease in the amount of Late Ottoman-Early Modern finds has obviously caused the thinning out of the total surface record.

In terms of mean densities by survey sectors, the northern half of the western ridge features slightly over 10 fragments per 1000 sq meters (graph 25, Appendix IV). In the northern half of the central survey section the transect collections recorded 8.5 and on the northern half of the eastern ridge 7.5 fragments per 1000 sq meters. The density of Late Ottoman-Early Modern finds remains stable and in fact it is slightly higher on the southern half of the eastern ridge and in the southern half of the central survey section. Only on the southern half of the western ridge do we see a sharper decrease, with a mean sector's value of less than 6 fragments per 1000 sq meters. The overall pattern doesn't change significantly assuming that total collections by transect units were made on all field blocks (map V_29b). The northern halves of the western ridge and the central survey section feature roughly equal mean densities, while on the eastern ridge the decline is sharper than indicated by the transect collections, especially in the northern half. Understandably if all counted finds were collected the contrast between the southern half of the western ridge and the rest of the survey sections also becomes sharper.

The overall pattern is very much clear. Artifact density decreases from north to south and more gently from west to east. Regarding the locations of the present-day villages, this distribution is far from surprising. It is but an enhanced version of the Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman off-site carpet. The difficulties of interpretation begin to arise once the distribution by field blocks is looked at in a greater detail. We are faced not only with considerable variations within the limits of single survey sections, but also with roughly concentric patterns of distribution. This is especially evident in the sections featuring average or lower than average artifact densities, such as the eastern ridge or the southern half of the western ridge. The density of Late Ottoman-Early Modern finds suddenly increases on groups of contingent field blocks, covering areas of over 1 hectare. It is often possible to observe a typical on-site patterning, with field blocks featuring very high artifact densities surrounded by field units featuring average or higher than average densities. The groups of field blocks 38a/b-40a/b and 495-497 on the upper terraces of the eastern ridge and in the southern half of the western ridge are particularly good examples. They are in principle undistinguishable from the clusters of field blocks featuring on-site densities of Roman material. It has to be emphasized though that this patterning is to a certain degree, the artificial product of the inconsistencies in the individual transect collections. If total collections by individual transects are assumed, the density of Late Ottoman-Early Modern finds further increases on these groups of field blocks, while on the surrounding field units the increase is slight. Consequently the roughly concentric pattern disappears and these groups of field blocks emerge as isolated density peaks.

In most instances the total survey by regular grids confirmed the results of the transect survey and considering the average density per grid, they are very close to the values predicted on the basis of the transect survey (graph 27, Appendix IV, map V_30). This was the case not only on those field blocks where the transect survey recorded very low artifact densities (covered by grids 5-11 or 20), but also on the field blocks featuring very high densities (grids 19, 15-17). On certain grids however, the total collections didn't produce the expected maximums. This was

especially pronounced on grids 12, 22 and 25. In all three cases we expected fairly high artifact densities, close to those recorded on grids in the central survey section. These discrepancies between the transect and the grid survey records could be related to changes in the surface layer, though we observed that in both survey areas finds datable to the last two centuries formed the most stable fraction of the surface record. We also thought of the possibility that the material on these units is more obtrusive (indeed tile is fairly numerous on grid 12).But the problem arose not so much from overestimating the true densities on field blocks covered by grids 12 or 22 as from the underestimating of artifact densities on the field blocks in the central survey section. The true amount of surface material in this survey section came to light only after the regular grid survey, although for some field units the transect survey also indicated high artifact density.

The patterns revealed by the total grid survey look much more like the typical off-site distributions. On the majority of the grids regardless of the artifact density, the carpet of Late Ottoman-Early Modern finds lacks a clear focus (map V_31, 32). The material is evenly spread over much of the gridded areas and the recorded density rarely exceeded 10 fragments per 100 sq meters. As we saw on certain grids (5-11, 14 and 20) larger portions of the gridded areas were sterile with low isolated peaks. Essentially the same pattern was revealed on grids 15-17 and 19, the difference being that on these grids, the density of Late Ottoman-Early Modern finds was considerably higher. The great majority of the grid units featured over 15 fragments per 100 sq meters and on grid 19, the total survey recorded over 30 fragments per 100 sq meters on three contingent units in the centre of the gridded area. It should be noted that the true maximums are much higher. On certain grids they could increase for almost 100% were all collected finds included in the analysis.

However on a few grids the concentric pattern characteristic for the on-site distributions returns. This is particularly apparent on grids 1 and 23-24, where we see both wider ranges between the maximum and the minimum densities and clustering of grid units with high artifact densities in certain parts of the gridded areas. Finer variations can also be observed on grids 21 and 22, both covering the central parts of the western ridge. As explained in the appendix, it is not by chance that these grids spread over more than one field unit. This is not a strict rule, as grids 2 or 4 although covering at least two or three field units revealed thin and even carpets across the gridded area. On the other hand, the smallest variations were observed on smaller grids, limited to one or two neighbouring fields. In other words, there were no significant fluctuations on a field block level, within the limits of individual agricultural parcels. This is most apparent on grids covering larger continuous segments of the survey area, such as grids 1-2 or 15-18. Here grid units with higher artifact densities are usually limited to certain agricultural fields. The large amount of Late Ottoman-Early Modern material collected from grids 1 and 17 cannot be traced across the grid limits and into the neighbouring fields covered by grids 2 and 18 (map V_31).

That there were significant variations in artifact densities across the grids is finally indicated by the comparison of the average densities recorded on the gridded areas (graph 27, Appendix IV). This revealed very dramatic fluctuations over rather short distances, which we pointed out during the discussion of the chronological composition of the total collections from the Roman sites on the eastern ridge. One may recall the case of grids 19 and 20; although spaced only 200 meters apart in the central parts of the survey area, the difference in artifact density is more than tenfold. Over 110 fragments per 1000 sq meters were recorded on grid 19 and only about 10 fragments per 1000 sq meters on grid 20. Similar drastic fluctuations were revealed on grids 1 and 2, situated next to each other on the upper terraces of the eastern ridge.

The linear trends observed in the distribution of the Late Ottoman-Early Modern finds by field blocks disappear even when comparing the average densities recorded on grids that cover parts of different survey sections.

This peculiar distribution simply reflects the fact that each of the agricultural fields present a discrete locus of material deposition. It has to be stressed that at least some of the agricultural parcels which we used as field walking and quantification units could be a couple of centuries old. The sudden and often sharp differences in the amounts of off-site debris are actually revealing the distinct histories of material deposition on each separate field. After all one has to assume that the off-site debris was deposited by individual or possibly, by groups of contingent fields and not in large sways over the entire agricultural zone. Apart from the accessibility of the fields, other factors that could influence the variable distribution of off-site material are the soil properties and the type of cultures grown[429]. One also has to take into account the fact that manure was not equally available to every family and even if it was, it will hardly be distributed evenly across all fields, regardless of the location, soil type or culture. It has been pointed out that concentrating manure on certain fields is primarily a matter of investment strategies of individual farmers[430].

To a large degree this helps us better understand the very dense concentrations of Late Ottoman-Early Modern off-site debris revealed by the regular grid survey on certain fields in the central survey section. As with the much thinner carpets of Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman and Late Roman finds, the average densities recorded on grids 17 and 19 are considerably higher than on the rest of the gridded areas. This suggests that at least some of the gardens along the Skopje-Kučevište asphalt road have been a focus of intensive agricultural exploitation during three different time periods; four, if we consider the dense off-site of Roman finds on grid 19.

During the description of the survey area, we mentioned that like the wider study region it presents a mosaic of various soil types. Ethnographers have observed that the local inhabitants had developed an elaborate classification system for the local soils[431]. Unfortunately there are no detailed soil maps of this region and it is impossible to relate this variable to the fluctuations in the off-site record. It is equally difficult to point to a straightforward relation between the types of cultures grown and the presence of off-site debris. The most illuminating examples are the densities recorded on field blocks 2 and 320, on both of which the transect survey records were confirmed by the regular grid surveys. Both fields were vineyards, situated less than 200 meters apart and easily accessible from the local road-network. Yet while field block 320 featured over 20 Late Ottoman-Early Modern fragments per 1000 sq meters, this material was almost completely absent from field block 2. Nevertheless we can observe that over 90% of the field units featuring very high density of Late Ottoman-Early Modern off-site material were planted with cereals. This group included only a small number of gardens and vineyards, mostly the much-discussed examples along the Skopje-Kučevište road. Hardly surprising off-site material was mostly absent on fallow or abandoned fields, although Late Ottoman-Early Modern artifacts were sometimes scarce even on fields planted with cereals and on gardens.

Despite the often significant localized variations, the survey results confirmed that the spreading of this off-site carpet is largely related to the proximity of the contemporary settlements. There is an undeniable decrease in the quantity of the off-site material along the north-south and west-east axis, although the proximity to local roads apparently wasn't a

[429] R. Shiel, A. Stewart, 95-100, J. Bintliff, P. Howards, A. Snodgrass, et al. 2007.
[430] H. Forbes, 159-172, ed. R. Jones, 2012.
[431] S. Tomić, 455-464, 1905.

particularly strong factor. These tendencies were actually slightly obscured by the decision to collect less material from a number of field blocks in the northern halves of the central survey section and the eastern ridge. Naturally this mostly affects field blocks featuring very high overall artifact densities, which automatically decreases the differences in artifact densities between the survey sections. We saw that if all counted material is included in the analysis, the concentrations of the Late Ottoman-Early Modern material in the northwest survey quarter and especially along the Skopje-Kučevište road would have been much more pronounced. But the Montenegro survey also shows that there are other, less predictable factors related to the varying agricultural practices of individual farmers or even to isolated events of debris discard.

V.8 Conclusions: the history of settlement in the second survey and the wider study region

The second survey area had a fairly short and patchy history of human occupation. In contrast to the settlement history of the first survey area, there is very little substance to relate with the developments on a broader regional level. In fact this applies for the integral region of the Skopje Basin; much of its settlement history is probably lost forever under the strong waves of urbanization in the past several decades. It is no accident that the great majority of the known archaeological sites come from the periphery of the basin. But even in these micro-regions, only certain periods of the past are represented in the archaeological record. In this respect the sequence of settlement revealed in the survey area largely follows the known regional developments, although there are certain differences.

Before summarizing the history of human habitation in the second survey area, it is important to consider some of the factors possibly related to the presence of such a small number of periods in the surface record. After all compared to the first survey area, this is a larger territory, characterized by gentler relief and richer agricultural resources. Only the intensively surveyed area extends over 1.1 kilometers of almost 100% arable land. If we assume that the productivity of these soils is comparable to that of the thin soils along the Middle Vardar and allow for 5.5 hectares large individual estates, the farmland available only in the limits of the survey area could comfortably sustain a community of almost 20 families.Allowing for a more intensive agricultural regime with individual estates occupying about 3.6 hectares, the maximum number of families could rise to almost 30[432]. Understandably the catchments of the possible settlements in the second survey can extend far beyond the survey limits, encompassing most of the central portion of the foothills. As the small valleys that dissect the plain are not very steep, even the exploitation of the land along the banks of the neighbouring Kučeviški and the Pobuški Stream could still be feasible; although one could predict that the maximal theoretical area would have spread further south, within the limits of the surveyed basin. Setting the limits of this theoretical territory at a distance of 2-3 kilometers from the hypothetical settlement centre[433], it will measure between 15 and 20 sq kilometers. Except for the northern end including a small section of the mountainside, the rest of this land is cultivable. In fact because of the local topography, it is likely that the territory of this hypothetical settlement will mostly spread to the south, with arable land comprising almost 100%. Such an extensive farmland can support a community of over 300 households, exceeding even the largest of the present-day villages by 50%. It is thus more than apparent that the carrying capacity of the survey area and the wider

[432] For the minimum and average size of individual farming estates see the discussions in M.H. Jameson et al, 400-415, 1994; J. Bintliff, P. Howard, A. Snodgrass, et al. 158-159, 2007.

[433] J. Bintliff, 510-511, ed. G. Barker, 1999.

study region couldn't have been a constraining factor in the local settlement history. Even the area of slightly over 1 sq kilometer covered by the intensive survey can sustain a hamlet or even a small village. Other factors must have contributed to the discontinuous history of habitation in the second survey area.

All in all there are three main phases of human settlement in the second survey area. The earliest, dating to an unknown later prehistoric period is represented by a couple of dozen fragments. They were found scattered on several field blocks along the top and the upper slopes of the eastern and western ridges. Their concentration is far greater on the eastern ridge, which isn't necessarily related to the fact that the more intensive regular grid survey covered a larger portion of this survey section. Both on the eastern and western ridges this material was confined to the upper slopes and the crests, never appearing on the lower sections and in the central parts of the basin. Although the collection is very small and not fully homogeneous, the distribution of the finds provides a hint for the earliest chapter of the settlement history in the second survey area. Most of the finds were found isolated, accompanied by larger amounts of Late Ottoman-Early Modern debris or more often, by loads of unearthed Roman material. Only rarely did they form tiny clusters of several fragments, always on later Roman sites. These individual or small groups of finds are spaced a few hundred meters apart, heralding the distribution of the Roman farms.

It is difficult to come up with an interpretation different than that adopted for the Bronze Age settlement in the Sopot survey. The handful of prehistoric fragments from the Montenegro survey are the vestigial remains of small, isolated farmsteads (map V_33). In all probability they didn't differ essentially from their Roman successors. The thin and highly dispersed scatter could hardly represent the remains of a larger nucleated settlement. At the same time it is also evident that this is not a mere section of a more extensive carpet of prehistoric finds. It was emphasized that they were exclusively confined to the crests and the upper slopes of the ridges, with a possible greater concentration on the eastern ridge. Thus as in the Roman Period, farming was probably concentrated on the slopes and on the valley floors. The small size of these establishments, their likely short life-spans, coupled by a centuries-long history of intensive agricultural exploitation have ensured that only a tiny fraction of the original ceramic assemblage survived or made its way into the surface record[434]. We repeat the fact that the small collection of prehistoric finds doesn't form a coherent ceramic assemblage. It actually remains uncertain if the entire collection dates to a single or more than one prehistoric period. Judging by the basic fabric features, none of these finds dates earlier than the Late Bronze Age.

In the entire region of Skopje, only 25 known sites are datable between the end of the 13th and the end of the 4th century BC (map V_34)[435]. In the Skopje Basin itself, there are less than a dozen late prehistoric sites, all but one of which are dated between the end of the 8th and the end of the 4th century BC. These consist almost exclusively of fortified hill-tops and accidentally discovered necropoleis. In fact only two of these sites have been characterized as open settlements, although it is clear that at least some of the necropoleis also belonged to open settlements. Mound burials, the hallmark of the Iron Age landscape in the southern regions of the country are unknown in the Skopje Basin[436]. In contrast to the settlement distribution during the Neolithic, almost all of the known late prehistoric sites are situated along the periphery of the

[434] M. Kuna, 29-44, eds. J. Bintliff, M. Kuna, N. Venclová, 2000; E. Neustupný, 49, ed. E. Neustupný, 1998.

[435] *Arheološka karta na Republika Makedonija*, vol. II, 609-616, Skopje 1996.

[436] D. Mitrevski, 1997.

basin. This is the hilly zone separating the basin's floor from the surrounding mountainside, described in chapter IV[437]. The micro-regions that belong to this geo-pedologic zone are one of the oldest settlement niches in the Skopje Basin. Most of the known Iron Age and Early Antique sites are situated near villages from later historical periods. The survey area and the wider study region are also part of this zone and it is very possible that the "oppidum" near modern Brazda was not the only late prehistoric settlement in this large and relatively fertile region[438]. Indeed ethnographers have made a number of vague references to "prehistoric" tombs and lithics accidentally unearthed near the villages Mirkovci, Kuševište and Pobužje, but this is impossible to confirm at present[439]. Despite the low degree of systematic research, it is undeniable that the Skopje Basin like many other regions in the country experienced a growth during the periods of the Iron Age and Early Antiquity. The appearance of the small amount of late prehistoric material in the surface record of the second survey area is therefore hardly a surprise. If these are truly the remains of isolated or small group of farmsteads, it implies that the late prehistoric settlement had set the precedent for all later settlement in the surveyed basin.

As explained in the conclusion to chapter III, the fortified Iron Age and Early Antique settlements came to an abrupt end by the late 4th century BC[440]. During the next three centuries up until the Roman conquest of Moesia, the region of Skopje enters a "Dark Age" phase. According to the archaeological atlas, only one accidental find in the entire region of Skopje can be dated to the Hellenistic Period. Professor I. Mikulčić mentions several burials on the later urban territory of Scupi, relating them with the small predecessor of the Roman colony, but these findings have not been confirmed by later excavations[441]. While not denying the evident decline and contraction of settlement during this period, it is difficult to accept that the relatively large region of the Skopje Basin was simply deserted during the Hellenistic Period. Apparently older settlements have either contracted or were shifted to other less prominent sites, still awaiting their discovery and proper documentation. The known historical events pertaining to the Skopje Basin, the advance of the Dardanian tribes and the constant wars with Macedon can only explain the abrupt breach with earlier tradition, but not the complete lack of information about the archaeology of this region during the Hellenistic Period. As will be shown, a very similar episode follows the end of Antiquity lasting through most of the Middle Ages.

The most substantial settlement remains from the second survey are broadly dated to the Roman Period, not later than the first half of the 4th century AD. As it often happens there are not too many elements to propose a more precise dating. Archaeologists have only recently started to uncover the remains of Early and Mid-Imperial Scupi; most of the data published over the past decades come from excavations on the city necropolis[442]. In fact the dating proposed is mostly based on negative evidence, on the absence of pottery characteristic for the Late Roman Period

[437] J. Trifunovski, 347-349, 1955.

[438] D. Koračević, Praistoriski naod od Brazda, 57-65, *Macedoniae Acta Archaeologica* 3, 1977; I. Mikulčić, 21-23, 1982, I. Mikulčić, V. Sokolovska, 79-93, 1990.

[439] J. Trifunovski, *7*, 1971; the author mentions a mound with urn burials destroyed during the construction of a road near Mirkovci. Unfortunately he doesn't give a more precise location. As explained in an earlier chapter, mound burials typically belong to the first half of the first millennium BC.

[440] I. Mikulčić, 20-21, 1982; although the most recent excavations on the Skopje citadel didn't confirm the existence of Iron Age layers, the general observations concerning the chronology of settlement in the Skopje Basin are still valid.

[441] I. Mikulčić, Neilirski elementi medju skupskim nalazima na prelazu iz predrimskog u Rimsko Doba, 245-258, *Sahranjivanje kod Ilira (*a symposium), Beograd 1979; L. Jovanova, 197-221, 2008.

[442] I. Mikulčić, 89-102, T. I-XII, 1973-1974; L. Jovanova, D. Mihailova, Skupi-Istočna nekropola, 203-248, *Macedoniae Acta Archaeologica* 15, 1999.

among the discovered assemblages. The material finds close parallels among the pottery excavated from Scupi's eastern necropolis, from tombs dated between the early second and the middle of the 4th century AD.

We believe that there were at least 9 farmsteads in the second survey area during the Roman Period (map V_35). They are irregularly distributed into three groups: one larger, occupying the upper terraces of the eastern ridge and its low off-shoot that encloses the survey area from the southeast and two smaller in the central parts of the ridge and in the northern end of the survey area. According to the distribution of the halo zone, in total occupying about 20 hectares and mostly concentrated on the terraces, in-between the central sites, the most intensive farming was focused on the slopes of the eastern ridge and only on certain sections of the valley floor. It is evident that these 20 hectares represent only the most intensively cultivated parts of the landscape and that the agricultural territory of these farms spread over most of the eastern ridge and possibly over parts of the western ridge. This pattern of settlement and agricultural exploitation consisting of an inner ring of fields planted with labour-demanding cultures and an outer ring of fields with crops that require less care and no irrigation is attested both in historical sources and archaeologically[443] and we also observed in the first survey area.

The network of Roman farmsteads was completed by an isolated, small-sized cluster and a small fortification, both occupying the top of the eastern ridge. Like the forts discovered in the Sopot survey, the surface of the fortified area was almost sterile. Consequently there is no clear positive evidence to chronologically relate this fortification with the network of agricultural estates spread on the lower terraces. Only the close topographical relatedness between the fortified hill-top and the western slope of the ridge indicate that the fort and the network of farmsteads were at least partly contemporary forming an integral settlement complex (map V_35). An alternative explanation would be that the fort and perhaps even the small site on grid 3 were established after the network of dispersed farms was abandoned. Because of the rough chronological resolution, this thesis is equally difficult to support with positive evidence.

Needless to stress there is very little information about the types of rural settlements during the Roman Period, especially for the regions of the Balkan interior. In regional archaeology, surface scatters of Roman material found in the countryside are often indiscriminately called villae or vici, or simply "settlements"[444]. These terms particularly the villa, often carry only vague connotations; sometimes designating independent rural settlement units, sometimes referring to larger estates that are part of larger nucleated settlements. The term vicus designates nucleated rural settlements, usually but not necessarily, protected by fortifications. Theoretically the distinction is very much clear-cut: villas are larger agricultural estates belonging to medium or larger landowners, while vici are nucleated, rural settlements, roughly the equivalent of modern villages and hamlets. The latter are often associated with pre-Roman settlements that didn't develop into truly urban centres after the Roman conquest[445]. However the archaeological identification of these two categories of rural settlements is far more troublesome.

In total only two Roman villas have been excavated and published on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, both discovered in the southern parts of the country[446]. Much more data

[443] J.L. Bintliff, P. Howard, A.M. Snodgrass, et al. fig 4.3, 2007; traditional peasant-farmers seem to make an analogous distinction between "wet" and "dry" cultures, J. Trifunovski, fig. 3, 1955.

[444] *Arheološka Karta na Republika Makedonija*, vol II, 1996, and in most reconnaissance reports.

[445] I. Mikulčić, 64, 1982.

[446] I. Mikulčić, 269-285, 1971; K. Kepeski, 143-156, 1976.

come from neighbouring regions in the Balkan interior, especially from the provinces along the Danube[447]. In the majority of cases these are large compounds, including elaborate residential buildings, spacious yards and various production facilities. But in some cases, Roman villas lack elaborate residential components and are limited to the storage and production facilities, the so called *pars rustica*[448]. Smaller landowners would naturally build smaller and simpler estates and one also has to take into account the possible socio-economic and regional differences. On the other hand, almost nothing is known about the size and the character of the *vicus* as a form of rural settlement, in most countries of the Balkan Peninsula[449]. When applied the term simply refers to rural sites, lacking in urban planning or traces of monumental architecture. In the regional archaeological literature there are no examples of Roman *vici* documented through surface survey or excavations[450]. Most commonly the distinction between Roman *villae* and *vici* is purely architectural, despite the fact that theoretically the two terms designate different types of settlement units.

Some authors have proposed that strictly speaking a Roman rural villa shouldn't be related to a nearby urban or rural agglomeration[451]. According to this perspective, a *villarustica* in the real sense of the word is an autonomous settlement unit, with its own territory and consequently farms or other agricultural estates in the near vicinity of nucleated settlements don't belong to this category, despite the similarities in the architecture and planning. Obviously the aim of this fairly narrow definition is to avoid distinctions solely based on formal and architectural characteristics. But there are problems associated with this approach. Understandably it shouldn't be difficult to maintain this criterion when distinguishing between isolated villas and complexes in the agricultural territories of larger urban centres. But this is hardly attainable when one needs to make a distinction between an autonomous villa and an agricultural estate gravitating towards a minor, nucleated settlement. This is practically impossible in the absence of detailed survey or excavation data. Even assuming that the location and the character of the nucleated settlements are known, there still remains the delicate problem of drawing the limits of its agricultural territory[452]. It is evident that this definition encompasses only the very large estates, the Roman *latifundia*, which according to ancient authors owned at least half a square kilometer of agricultural land, pastures and groves[453].

The size and the distribution of the clusters of Roman material found in the Montenegro survey bear an undeniable resemblance to the plans of excavated Roman villas. Studying the villas discovered in other regions of the province of Upper Moesia, mostly on the territory of modern-day Bulgaria, it is evident that the size of the majority of the fully excavated examples

[447] A. Mócsy, 1972; L. Mulvin, 377-413, eds.W. Bowden, L. Lavan, C. Machado, 2004; V. Dinčev, 1997; A.G. Poulter, The Roman to Byzantine transition in the Balkans: preliminary report on Nicopolis and its hinterland, 347-358, *Journal of Roman Studies* 13, 1999; A.G. Poulter, 51-98, ed. A.G. Poulter, 2007.

[448] V. Dinčev, 17-18, 1997; L. Mulvin 379, 2004; for Roman villas in general, J. T. Smith, *Roman villas: a study in social structure*, New York 1997.

[449] A.G. Poulter, 223-254, ed. N. Christie, 2004. Vici are better known from the western Roman provinces, M. Rorison, *Vici in Roman Gaul*, Oxford 2001.

[450] I. Mikulčić 64, 1982 has identified three vici among the Roman fortifications in the SkopjeBasin, but the author solely relies on the meager construction of the walls and the simple planning.

[451] V. Dinčev 9-24, 1997; see the criticism by A.G. Poulter 229-230, ed. N. Christie, 2004.

[452] V. Dinčev 18, 1997. In the hinterland of Nicopolis ad Istrum, Roman villas were discovered at every 2.5 kilometers, dividing the landscape into very large estates, roughly measuring 500 ha. A. G. Poulter, 239, ed. N. Christie, 2004.

[453] K.D. White, *Roman farming*, London 1970.

ranges between 1-2000 and 5-6000 sq meters[454]. Only a few exceptional examples occupied areas greater than one hectare. These are usually estates of very rich landowners or higher ranking members of the provincial administration. Thus the areas occupied by the average villas are nearly identical to the areas over which our medium and large-sized clusters are spread. Moreover in some cases very great similarities were noted between the plans of excavated villa complexes and the shapes and on-site distributions of surface material on the sites discovered in the second survey. Usually the various buildings of the villa compound are arranged around an inner court-yard, but there are also many examples with plans in the shape of the Greek letters Γ or Π. The elongated shapes of some of the discovered clusters look very much like the so called corridor-shaped units, often enlarged in later phases by adding buildings at the ends of the corridor. More importantly some of the excavated villas lacked an inner courtyard and the various components of the complex were dispersed across larger areas. In these cases the major component (presumably the residential part) can be accompanied by several, many times smaller outbuildings, sometimes situated at distances of a few hundred meters. The similarities with some of the discovered clusters are difficult to ignore, especially the group of clusters on grids 6-8 and field blocks 47a-b, 49-50. Even the size of the smaller subsidiary structures is strikingly similar to our small-sized clusters, rarely exceeding 1000 sq meters.

Regarding size and inner planning, it seems there is little room for doubts over the character of the sites discovered in the Montenegro survey. However turning to the other aspects that characterize Roman villas in the inner Balkan provinces, the evidence is far from positive. First of all, the context in which they were found doesn't meet the criterion of the villa as an isolated, independent settlement unit. Even allowing for an extreme dispersal of the various components of the villa complex, it is obvious that there were at least three separate complexes in the survey area. While it is possible to join the sites situated between grids 5-11 and 10 into a single very large complex, it is evident that the clusters on grids 15-18 and 27 and the clusters on grids 1 and 2 formed separate estates[455]. Such close co-existence of at least three separate villa complexes cannot be cited in the literature available. The greatest distance between two neighboring medium and large-sized cluster never exceeds 250-300 meters. Assuming that the surrounding agricultural land was evenly divided between these farms, each was allotted with agricultural areas not larger than several hectares. This is still above the limit of 10 iugera or about 2.5 hectares, according to Roman authors, the minimum size of a small estate[456]. But they are obviously far from the size of a large or a medium-sized estate and in this respect they don't qualify as typical rural villas[457]. In this context it is noteworthy that the potential agricultural territories of the discovered sites are surprisingly close to the estimated halo areas. On the majority of residential sites they ranged between 1.5 and 3 hectares. Understandably it shouldn't be excluded that these farms owned land outside their immediate catchments, but the most

[454] V. Dinčev 1997; regarding planning and size, some of the villas are near replicas of the Roman sites in the second survey, especially pl. 3, 15, 41. There are also close similarities with the villa rustica near Prilep, K. Kepeski pl. 1, 1976. See also examples in J.T. Smith, 199-217, 1997; L. Mulvin, 385-394, eds.W. Bowden, L. Lavan, C. Machado, 2004; M. J, Boyd, fig 2, 3, ed. A. G. Poulter, 2007.

[455] The greatest distance between two outbuildings belonging to the same villa-complex rarely exceeds 200-250 meters, V. Dinčev 15, 1997; A.G. Poulter, 235, ed. N. Christie, 2004.

[456] K.D. White 387-388, 1970; note however, that the author is citing older sources, from the time of the LateRepublic.

[457] However, if we look at the evidence of the South Etruria survey we will see that the majority of the small rural sites had similar territories, T. Potter, 122, 125, 1979; the author stressing the fact that the physical environment in the survey region would make large landholdings impractical; H. Goodchild, 110-118, 2007.

intensively exploited land would have been limited to the fields in the immediate vicinity of the sites, roughly coinciding with the site halos.

The other negative evidence comes from the character of the collected finds. Roman villas are commonly associated with solid architecture, often with visible building remains on the surface[458]. The studied villa complexes from Bulgaria often include large dining halls, baths, sanctuaries and in some cases even defensive walls. Fragments of columns and architectural pieces are common, even as surface finds. Luxurious table ware, glass and mosaic *tesserae* are regular inventories of the archaeological record on villa-sites. Apart from a handful of fine pottery fragments of a higher quality, none of this was present in the surface record of the second survey area. Even stone rubble was very scarce, despite the large quantities of architectural ceramics. In fact fragments of fine sigillata and roughly hewn stone-blocks were only found on the cluster on grid 3, underlining its special character. On the rest of the clusters the domestic pottery was either plain or had faintly preserved traces of poor, lean slip. With the evidently humble character of the finds and the lack of visible architectural remains on the surface, these small agricultural estates are incomparable to the elaborate villa complexes in the Balkan provinces. Although seemingly planned along very similar lines, their walls were probably built of mud-brick or roughly cut stone joined by mud. The surface material gathered indicates that they were inhabited by a poorer community of farmers or herdsmen. Despite the close proximity to Scupi, almost none of the luxury items produced in the colony found their way into the surface record of the survey area.

Admittedly the absence of solid architectural remains and luxurious artifacts doesn't necessarily exclude the possibility that these are individual agricultural estates of rich landowners[459]. Examples of Roman villas without residential components are known from other regions of Upper Moesia, in modern northwest Bulgaria. These are essentially the properties of rich town-dwellers whose estates were run by slaves, tenant farmers or sharecroppers. The examples published are indeed much humbler in comparison to residential villas[460]. They are characterized by very simple plans, poor masonry and earthen floors. In one or two cases the researchers have noted the scarcity of building stone, concluding that the upper parts of the walls were entirely constructed of wood and mud-brick[461]. Not surprisingly however, only a few examples of villas without residential components are known and in nearly all of these cases, the complexes were only partly uncovered. To further complicate matters, dwellings that are parts of rural nucleated complexes sometimes repeat the architectural planning of villa complexes. In fact as noted by earlier authors, by the time of the Late Republic and the Early Empire the typical villa plan with an inner courtyard, surrounded by the various functional components is obviously inspired by the urban palaces with peristyle yards[462]. Hence it is impossible to determine the social rank of the estate solely on the basis of the plan and size of the buildings. Detailed survey data from the surroundings is necessary and this is rarely available in the published studies.

There is one final possibility that needs to be briefly considered. The rural sites survey in the hinterland of ancient Nicopolis ad Istrum revealed a peculiar pattern of a large, residential villa complexes accompanied by outbuildings and the humble remains of what the author interpreted as a village or a hamlet, situated several hundred meters away from the central

[458] I. Mikulčić, 1971; V. Dinčev, 1997; L. Mulvin, 381, eds.W. Bowden, L. Lavan, C. Machado, 2004.
[459] V. Dinčev, 17-18, 1997.A.G. Poulter, 229-230, ed. N. Christie, 2004.
[460] In total, only five examples are cited by V. Dinčev 68-73, 1997.
[461] M.J. Boyd, 601, ed. A.G. Poulter, 2007.
[462] A.G. McKay, *Houses, villas and palaces in the Roman World*, London 1975.

residence[463]. It is possible that in our case, we managed to document only a part of the original arrangement, the main residence remaining hidden beyond the limits of the survey. This is an option that needs to be taken seriously, although there are two chief objections against this view. First, unlike in the cases of Nicopolis ad Istrum and elsewhere[464], the supposed community of dependent farmers didn't live in a nucleated village or hamlet but in a highly dispersed settlement, with clear evidence that the land lying in-between the settlement units was intensely cultivated. We already agreed that the discovered sites were not the remains of agglomerated dwellings but farmstead, albeit of a much lower rank than the rich villas commonly found in the literature. Secondly, as we'll see in the following paragraphs, although there is definite evidence that high ranking officials from the nearby colony of Scupi had properties in Skopian Montenegro, none of the accidentally discovered tombstones or sarcophagi can be related to the area covered by the survey. The remains of a large residential villa complex can hardly remain completely hidden.

Regardless of the exact socio-historical character of the revealed network of Roman sites, for the moment it is more likely that these are the remains of individual or pairs of agricultural estates, rather than a nucleated settlement organized into separate dwelling quarters. For the latter there are simply no known parallels from the central regions of the Balkan Peninsula. But at the same time, it must be underlined that while villa estates are relatively well researched in certain parts of the Empire, other forms of rural settlement remain a complete mystery, especially in the central Balkan provinces. We still lack even the slightest idea of what the traditional rural houses looked like during this period, how big they were or whether they formed nucleated agglomerations or existed as isolated estates[465]. Briefly turning to the situation in Sopot during the Roman Period, one also notes a certain degree of settlement dispersal, although in this survey area there were much fewer separate clusters, set apart at greater distances. The network actually consisted of one larger and one medium-sized cluster, spaced nearly a kilometer apart and at least three other, possible non-residential sites, a kilometer and a half from the main cluster. The findings of the Montenegro survey beget a slight rethinking of the interpretations of the Sopot survey results.

In the first survey area, there were at least 6 separate clusters of Roman finds, three of which were identified as fully residential sites. Of the latter, two formed a closely related pair and were merged into a single site 5a-5b. The third, much smaller cluster comprised a full domestic assemblage and was situated at a considerable distance of nearly 1 kilometer, in a different survey sector. Still further away, at the other end of the survey area were the three clusters featuring assemblages predominantly made up of architectural ceramics. They too formed a closely related pair and an isolated cluster, situated nearly a kilometer away from the latter. This arrangement was interpreted as a combination of a small nucleated settlement and a farm accompanied by a group of non-residential sites or alternatively, as two nucleated settlements accompanied by satellite farms. The pattern is evidently different than that in the second survey area, with individual clusters spaced at greater distances and with a thinner off-site carpet. But this difference is largely dictated by the local topography. The fragmented character of the terrain in the first survey precluded clustering of more than one residential site

[463] A.G. Poulter, fig 2, in ed. A.G. Poulter, 2007.

[464] A very similar example is presented by V. Dinčev, 60-67, fig.59, 1997, from central Bulgaria.

[465] A.G. Poulter, 347-348, 1999; out of 15 sites documented by intensive survey and electric resistivity in the area of Nicopolis, 14 were determined as villas, although there is epigraphic evidence for rural settlements from the same area.

per topographic unit. Each of the topographic units that constituted the surveyed valley presented a physically separate settlement location. In the second survey, such micro-topographic divisions are non-existent. The surveyed basin forms an almost continuous stretch of gently sloping land. Although there are differences between the various points of the terrain concerning access to local roads and visual control, there is only a very vague physical fragmentation. In these conditions it is expected and indeed logical to see evenly spaced settlement units across a larger stretch of gentle and fertile territory. But even in the second survey there was an apparent preference for the eastern ridge and its upper slopes in particular.

Site 5a-b in the Sopot survey, interpreted as a small nucleated settlement measured between 0.8 and 1 hectare. In absolute terms it is not much larger than the large-size clusters from the second survey, although in comparison its area is almost twice as large. But is this difference sufficient to see this site as a nucleated settlement, rather than as a larger agricultural estate?[466] Examples of villa estates occupying areas of over 1 hectare are not uncommon for the central Balkans. However these are normally very luxurious establishments, with visible architectural remains on the surface[467]. In this respect the material that was encountered on the surface of site 5a-b differed little from the surface remains on the Roman sites in the second survey. Architectural material consisted exclusively of brick and tile fragments, while stone rubble was completely missing. Interestingly in both survey areas, there was a spatial differentiation between architectural ceramics and pottery suggesting that this is most probably the result of discard behaviour and taphonomic processes.

There are however a number of differences between the major Roman site in the Sopot survey and the large-sized clusters discovered in the Montenegro survey. First of all, there is the chronological difference. The great majority of the finds collected from site 5a-b in Sopot were dated to the Late Roman Period, while the Roman sites in Skopian Montenegro were dated not later than the late 4th century. Knowing that nearly none of the securely dated Roman villas in the region post-date the late 4th century, it is very unlikely that the region of Sopot, situated near the busy Vardar Valley corridor was an exception. But this doesn't mean that individual farming estates were unknown in the period of Late Antiquity. In fact the small Late Roman cluster on site 8 in the first survey, measuring around 3000 sq meters can only be interpreted as the remains of an individual farmstead.

There are also slight differences regarding the on-site distribution patterns. In Sopot we also observed a tendency to linear clustering of the on-site material, but the zones of higher concentration were more widespread, while multiple cores were common. On the other hand, the Roman sites in the Montenegro survey usually had the core limited to one or two grid units, featuring far greater artifact density than the rest of the site area. This is potentially related to the social rank and the architectural organization of the settlement, though it could be also determined by post-depositional factors[468]. The distribution pattern on the small cluster on site 8 looked much more like the on-site distribution in the Montenegro survey, with the bulk of the finds concentrated on a pair of grid units and gradually decreasing artifact density along a single row of grid units.

[466] In regional survey projects in Greece sites of similar size are usually identified as small hamlets or large farms; J.L. Bintliff, P. Howard, A. Snodgrass, 185, 2007; W. Cavanagh W. Cavanagh, J. Crouwel, R.W.V. Catling, G. Shipley et al. 2002; C. Mee, H. Forbes, et al. 1997.

[467] V. Dinčev, pl.12, 18, 1997.

[468] Cf. J. Bintliff, P. Howard, A. Snodgrass, sites THS 12 and THS 14, 2007.

Finally, there is an important difference in the general property of the ceramics. The Roman material from the Sopot survey was part of a centuries-long tradition of local ceramic production. The shapes and techniques differed very little from earlier, prehistoric pottery production, while lacking clear parallels among the Roman pottery typically found in larger settlements. The relatively large number of misfired tile and pottery is also suggesting local production. In comparison, misfired fragments and wasters were rare among the Roman finds from Skopian Montenegro. The second survey area obviously lacked a strong pre-Roman tradition and the tile and pottery collected find very close parallels among the material recently excavated from Scupi's eastern necropolis.

Doubtless it is near impossible to clearly determine the architectural organization of the discovered sites solely on the basis of the distribution of surface finds. The differences observed in the on-site distributions in Sopot and Skopian Montenegro can equally reflect divergent settlement type and organization and different post-depositional processes. Nevertheless the size of the discovered clusters, as well as the character of the surface material,clearly determine the social rank of these settlements. These were either the remains of small hamlets or of individual farmsteads belonging to smaller landholders. For reasons already discussed, it is likely that the only true nucleated settlement was discovered on site 5a-b in the Sopot survey. The rest of the fully residential sites in the two survey areas were remains of individual farms. In all probability these are the lowest ranking settlements that one can expect in the Roman countryside. The small estates in Skopian Montenegro could produce enough surplus for trade, but there is very little or no positive evidence. The intensive collection and study of the surface material revealed an almost total absence of luxury items produced in larger settlement centres. Hence trade with the neighbouring towns was probably limited to a range of most basic products.

One notable feature of the Roman and Late Roman sites discovered in the two surveys is the relatively low on-site artifact density. In this respect, the clusters revealed in the second survey area featured somewhat higher artifact densities, but they were still much thinner in comparison to the high concentrations of artifacts encountered on the surface of prehistoric sites in the Sopot survey, with maximum densities often exceeding 50 fragments per 100 sq meters. This relative sparseness of the Roman on-site scatters becomes even more pronounced knowing that more than 50% of the Roman surface finds consisted of architectural ceramics, an artifact category that wasn't represented in pre-Roman assemblages. Moreover being deposited much later than prehistoric artifacts and generally being fired at higher, more stable temperatures, Roman ceramics is more likely to survive in the surface record[469]. How then to explain this apparent disagreement between expected and actual results? Other factors that can potentially influence the density of surface artifacts are the intensity and the character of occupation, its longevity and the quantity of ceramic artifacts produced and utilized by different cultures and societies[470]. Concerning the latter aspect it is certain that at least in some regions of the country, the Roman Period expanded the range of ceramic artifacts used by the local societies. The most apparent example is the introduction of the various forms of architectural ceramics, but there is also a wider range of pottery categories. The Sopot survey also showed that the longevity of occupation wasn't necessarily decisive, as some of the very dense prehistoric clusters could be

[469] J.L. Bintliff, P. Howard and A.M. Snodgrass, 145-149, 1999; M. Kuna, 33-34, eds. J. Bintliff, M. Kuna, N. Venclová, 2000.

[470] M. Kuna, 33, eds. J. Bintliff, M. Kuna, N. Venclová, 2000; M. Millett, Dating, quantifying and utilizing pottery assemblages from surface survey, 53-59, eds. R. Franovich, H. Patterson, 2000; E. Neustupný, 51, ed. E. Neustupný, 1998.

dated within a period of a couple of centuries[471]. The remaining cultural factor, the intensity and character of occupation is the most elusive one for surface archaeology. Analyzing the composition of the various Roman assemblages in the two survey areas, it was indeed concluded that certain assemblages were "incomplete". Certain categories of pottery normally found in domestic assemblages were almost completely missing. But full domestic assemblages didn't necessarily appear in the denser clusters. One wonders then, if the relatively low artifact density on residential sites from the Roman Period isn't related to the organization of domestic space in the countryside. There seem to be no apparent fault in assuming that a greater number of households per settlement will produce a higher density of surface debris. All other conditions being equal, individual agricultural estates including inner courtyards, animal sheds and other subsidiary buildings would inevitably leave thinner on-site scatters than a nucleated settlement consisting of a number of separate households and occupying an equally large area[472]. In other words, the larger vernacular complexes meant that there were less people per hectare of occupied area. Understandably these features are period and region-specific and more research is needed in order to infer the possible number of inhabitants on the basis of settlement areas. Finally, we have to allow for the agency of certain taphonomic factors in the determining the on-site artifact density. In the case of the sites from the Roman and Late Roman periods, although the introduction of tile and brick expands the range of ceramic artifacts associated with residential sites, the presence of heavy, tiled roofs can sometimes have the opposite effect[473]. This could offer a possible explanation for the "brick and tile clusters" discovered in both survey areas.

The sudden emergence of an extensive network of farmsteads in the second survey area mirrors the developments in the wider study region and in the Skopje Basin in general during the Roman Period. In contrast to the Hellenistic Period represented by only two sites for the entire region of Skopje, there are 111 sites dated to the Roman Period in the country's archaeological atlas. This figure probably including a number of Late Roman sites is far from definitive. In fact 25 years prior to the publication of the archaeological atlas, in the *Tabula Imperii Romani* series, 160 Roman sites were entered for the same geographical and administrative region[474]. The character of these sites (dislocated funerary steles, votive altars) indicates that despite the evident increase from the Hellenistic Period, the true number of Roman sites is probably much greater. Less than 30% of the Roman sites registered in the T.I.R. series and less than 20% of the Roman sites in the archaeological atlas were identified as open settlements. In both publications, more than 50% of the discovered sites consisted of "isolated" epigraphic monuments or forts. The majority of these sites were discovered accidentally. They actually represent the portion of sites with monumental architectural remains. Not surprisingly there usually lacks information about the precise location of these finds and about the surrounding context.

Although rather patchy and truncated, the data available are to a certain degree instructive of the settlement pattern in the Skopje Basin during the Roman Period. It definitely points to a strong expansion compared to earlier periods, though it has to be remembered that the character of the Roman sites is for the greater part dubious. The great majority of the accidentally discovered sepulchral monuments come from small, family mausoleums, in all probability, but

[471] J.L. Bintliff, A.M. Snodgrass, 131, 1985.

[472] Low artifact density and a thin habitation layer has also been observed on excavations of villa complexes, K. Kepeski, 146, 1976; the author has concluded that the villa was inhabited seasonally, during the harvest season.

[473] D. Pettegrew, 201, 2001.

[474] I. Mikulčić, Sectio Naissus-Dyrrachion-Scupis-Thessalonike, *Tabula Imerii Romani*, K-34, Ljubljana 1976.

not necessarily erected near the agricultural estates of their owners. This indicates that individual farms and villas were a significant component in the settlement pattern of the Early and Middle Imperial periods in the Skopje Basin. The issue is inextricably related to the foundation of the Roman colony and the actual extent of colonization[475].

As explained earlier, there is very little archaeological evidence apart from the corpus of epigraphic monuments and the dislocated remains of funerary architecture. They contain undeniable evidence relating to the settlement of army veterans in the region and a number of examples have actually come from Skopian Montenegro. As one might expect, the majority of the funerary steles and votive monuments come from the lower portions of the basin, closer to the more fertile stretches along the Vardar Valley, Scupi and the main interregional road[476]. Some authors have even speculated that the peripheral zones of the region were left to the autochthonous population[477]. But these zones, the mountainside and the peripheral hilly regions can also offer important natural resources, such as pastures, timber or minerals. These regions of the Skopje Basin were an integral part of the territory of Roman Scupi and the distribution of epigraphic monuments erected over the tombs of army veterans confirms that they owned properties in the peripheral parts of the Skopje Basin.

Looking at the spatial distribution and the chronology of these monuments, it is evident that they are not exclusively limited to the inner Skopje Basin, although they become scarcer in regions near the eastern and western limits of Scupi's territory (maps V_36 and 37)[478]. The funerary steles of at least eight colonists have been found in the region of Skopian Montenegro, mostly dislocated or from uncertain locations (map V_38). One L. Marcianus, a veteran legionary of the VII Claudiae, later, a *quaestor* and *duumvir* in Scupi was buried at his estate, about 3 kilometers to the south of the second survey area[479]. He died at the end of the 1st or the early 2nd century AD and was certainly one of the earliest Roman colonists in this region. Another stele from the same period comes from the territory of modern Mirkovci, 1.5 to 2 kilometers west of the survey area. It was erected over the tomb of a veteran from the I Italica legion, though there is no evidence that he held offices in Scupi. Two other steles from the environs of this village belonged to veteran legionaries and city officials, one of which also honors a veteran of the VII Caludiae legion and consequently cannot be later than the early 2nd century. Veterans from the VII Claudiae were also buried near the villages Banjane and Kučevište. The majority of modern researchers accept that veterans of this legion were among the first Roman colonizers of the Skopje Plain and the surrounding valleys[480]. Their funerary monuments appear not only in the region of Skopian Montenegro, but across the entire administrative area of modern and Roman Skopje. Examples are known from as far as the northern entrance in the Taor Canyon, not far from the first survey area and from the valley of the Markova Reka, tens of kilometers away from Scupi. The wider study region, situated 7-8

[475] B. Josifovska-Dragojević, 25-30, 1982; cf. T.W. Potter, 1979; P.A.J. Attema, G-J. L.M. Burgers, P.M. van Leusen, *Regional Pathways to Complexity: settlement and land-use dynamics in early Italy, from the Bronze Age to the Republican Period*, Amsterdam 2010.

[476] B. Josifovska-Dragojević, 28, 1982; I. Mikulčić, Teritorija Skupa 463-480, *Živa Antika* 21, 1971; cf. T.W. Potter, fig 27, 1979.

[477] B. Josifovska-Dragojević, 32, 1982.

[478] Mostly after I. Mikulčić, map 1, 2, 1971; I. Mikulčić, 1982; *Arheološka Karta na Republika Makedonija*, vol. II, 362-387, 1996.

[479] B. Josifovska-Dragojević, n.46, 37, 52, 68, 44, 54, 62 1982; L. Jovanova, Two Latin inscriptions from the village Kučeviška Bara, near Skopje 69-84, *Macedonian Heritage* 9-24, 2005.

[480] D. Koračević, 2002, B. Josifovska-Dragojević, 25, 1982.

kilometers north of Scupi was at least partly occupied during this main wave of colonization, in the later part of the 1st century AD.

Of particular significance is the fact that a great number of the monuments are dedicated to or by high-ranking city officials. We hear of *praetors* or *aedils* of Scupi who owned estates in some of the most peripheral parts of the Skopje Basin[481]. In the wider study region in particular, among the *spolia* built into the main parish church of Kučevište, there is a funerary stele commemorating an *aedile* and a member of the city council in Scupi. One of the steles from Mirkovci, dated to the mid-Imperial Period marked the tomb of another city council member and a *quaestor*. There is finally a votive altar, built into the main church in Ljuboten dedicated by an ex-slave and a member of the college of priests responsible for the Imperial cult in Scupi, the *augustales.* Apart from indicating that a wealthier class of citizens owned land in the wider study region, the epigraphic data hint at something far more significant regarding the character of the agricultural estates during the Early and Mid-Imperial periods. The abovementioned local functionaries had to be based in Scupi, at least during their time in office. This means that their agricultural estates were either run by middle-men or were only seasonally occupied. Doesn't this explain then the humble character of the finds and the low artifact density on the clusters discovered in the second survey area? To be sure not a single epigraphic monument has been reported from the surveyed basin, although this could very well be a mere coincidence. After all the majority of the steles used as *spolia* in the village churches have an unknown provenance.

Naturally there remains the problem of the indigenous, pre-Roman population of the Skopje Basin. One of the earlier researchers of the topography of Scupi and its necropoleis claimed that there existed a small community on Scupi's acropolis immediately prior to the arrival of the Roman legions[482]. This claim has not been supported by later research, although there are no firm grounds to fully reject it. Personal names of indigenous people abound in later epigraphic sources, along with evidence for the existence of local religious cults[483]. Specifically for the wider study region, we have one votive altar dedicated to the deity *Zbelturd*, a local interpretation of Jupiter. It was found built into a ruined church between the villages Ljubanci and Pobužje, situated about 1.7 kilometers from the survey area[484]. Many of the inscriptions from Skopian Montenegro bear typical Roman cognomens, the *Cornelii* and the *Rufii* being among the most prominent. But there are a number of names unattested in other parts of the Empire, such as one *Dardanus*, a son of the veteran who owned land near modern Mirkovci or *Solius Sur*, mentioned on an epitaph from a site situated only 1 kilometer from the survey's eastern limit. These men were part of the Romanized local population. They attained the status of Roman citizens either through military service or through inheritance.

It is beyond any doubt that the autochthonous pre-Roman population existed side by side with the Roman colonizers and migrants from the Greek-speaking and Oriental provinces. What remains unclear is the type of settlements in which this community was organized. Quite possibly their presence in the Skopje Basin prior to the arrival of the Roman legions was not as strong as in the neighbouring region of the southern half of Upper Moesia. This partly explains the intensive colonization of the Skopje Basin and the surrounding valleys, as well as the

[481] M. Basotova, A new veteran of the legion VII Claudia from the Colonia Flavia Scupi 405-409, *Arheološki Vestnik* 58, 2007; for steles of city-functionaries in the wider study region, B. Josifovska-Dragojević, n. 62, 68, 11, 1982

[482] I. Mikulčić, 249, 1979.

[483] B. Josifovska-Dragojević, 32-37, 1982; F. Papazoglu, 1969, especially 168-189.

[484] B. Josifovska-Dragojević, n. 18, 1982.

relatively swift Romanization of the area. In comparison in the neighbouring region to the east of Skopje, the region of modern Kumanovo, typically Roman aspects of material culture begin to appear only in the latter part of the 2nd and the early 3rd century AD. Votive dedications and funerary steles, architectural sculpture, coinage and even typical Roman pottery are still very rare prior to the middle of the 2nd century AD[485]!

Unfortunately we lack information about the exact locations on which the funerary steles of the earliest colonists in the study region were found. The majority of the funerary steles from Mirkovci are known to have come from fields along the valley of the Kučeviški, east of the village. The group of steles near the village Radišani, 2-3 kilometers south of the survey area were reportedly found west of the village, on a location very similar to the surveyed terrain[486]. Another group of Early to Middle Imperial funerary steles was recently discovered very near the latter site, in the lower parts of the surveyed basin, over 3 kilometers to the south[487]. The rest of the monuments found in the village churches have uncertain provenance. There is reliable evidence revealing that the architectural sculpture and funerary monuments were sometimes brought from distances of several kilometers. But the monuments found in-situ clearly demonstrate that there was a roughly even dispersal of isolated or groups of farms across the foothills. Apart from dislocated or monuments used as *spolia*, there is very little evidence from the zone of modern housing along the mountain foot. It remains uncertain if this is related to chances of preservation or if it reflects a genuine preference to settle the central and lower portions of the plain, the "lower shelves".

Apart from tombs and dislocated funerary monuments, on two sites in the wider study region there were remains of what was interpreted as settlement buildings. In fact one of the two sites is entered as a *villa rustica* in the archaeological atlas[488]. It is situated near the village Banjane by a copious fresh-water spring, 2.5 kilometers west-southwest of the survey area. The results of the rescue excavations were never published. It is only mentioned that the excavation revealed the foundations of a building, featuring several separate rooms arranged in the shape of the Greek letter Γ. On the northern end it terminated with an apsidal room with a colonnaded porch. These elements of the building plan are indeed typical for villa complexes. The large amounts of re-used architectural sculpture perhaps point to a later date for this estate, the late 3rd-4th century AD.

It would be particularly interesting to learn if the earliest colonial farms were independent units of settlement, formed extended networks or were joined to existing rural communities[489]. It wouldn't be surprising if all three modes were applied, including close cohabitation between agricultural estates and suburban villas. During the construction of a railway line, only about one kilometer northeast of Scupi, an accidental discovery brought to light a funerary stele dedicated by the inhabitants of *vicus Cavadinus* to a member of the local community[490]. In the immediate vicinity of this find-spot, archaeologists have observed large concentration of surface finds datable to the Roman Period, identifying the site with the *vicus* mentioned in the inscription. This settlement was situated in the narrower *ager* of the colony. One of the largest concentrations of

[485] I. Mikulčić, 469-473, 1971b.
[486] B. Josifovska-Dragojević, 241-249, 1974.
[487] L. Jovanova, 69-70, 2005.
[488] *Arheološka Karta na Republika Makedonia*, 364, 1996.
[489] A combination of a villa and a dependent hamlet spaced a few hundred meters apart are known from northern Bulgaria and central Greece, though in the Late Roman Period, V. Dinčev, fig. 59, 1997; J. Bintliff, P. Howard, A. Snodgrass, sites THS 2 and THS 16, 2007.
[490] B. Josifovska-Dragojević, n. 86, 1982.

Early Roman funerary monuments honoring the citizens of Scupi comes from an area situated only 1.5 kilometers to its east. The fact that early Roman colonists were allotted land properties in various parts of the Skopje Basin perhaps suggests that the autochthonous communities were organized into a few small nucleated settlements, leaving larger swathes of unoccupied territory. This considerable dispersal of colonists' estates could both aim at optimal exploitation of the newly conquered territory and at a more efficient Romanization and pacification of the local population.

Apart from *vicus Cavadinus*, there are only two other open settlements in the narrower Skopje Basin; the rest of the known archaeological sites consist of isolated objects (villas?) and isolated or groups of tombstones (map V_37). Considering the accidental character of these discoveries and the lack of systematic research, it is very probable that the true number of open, nucleated settlements is many times greater. Yet the same approach has produced rather different results in regions in the western and eastern periphery of the Skopje Basin, near the limits of the colony's territory. Here one still finds isolated funerary steles or votive inscriptions, but there are an equal or greater numbers of sites entered as open, rural settlements in the archaeological atlas. Judging by the evidence available in the published literature, the main focus of settlement for the Roman colonizers was the narrower Skopje Basin, including the wider study region and the neighbouring valley of the Markova Reka to the south.

This brief overview of the settlement pattern in the region of Skopian Montenegro and in the wider region of Skopje during the Early and Mid-Imperial Period sheds further light over the possible character of the sites discovered in the second survey. It is evident that the group of agricultural estates revealed in the second survey was a part of an extensive network of villas and farmsteads, spread across the entire Skopje Basin by the beginning of the 2nd century AD. Even if they belonged to the local native families, they were deeply Romanized by the early second century. The poor character of the material and the low on-site artifact density probably indicates the lower social status of their owners, as well as the fact that apart from the residence there were a number of non-residential, subsidiary buildings. In fact they could have still belonged to richer, city based landholders, but inhabited and maintained by middle-men and workers. It is nearly impossible to arrive at a certain conclusion without more comparative data. Surrounded by estates of colonizers and city officials, it would be rather unusual if the survey area was an enclave inhabited by local farmers. However the case of *vicus Cavadinus* demonstrates that such close coexistence was not uncommon. At the same time, the fact that the revealed farms form an integral network capped by a fortification and possibly a special-purpose site runs against the common perception of isolated villa-complexes. One wonders how much of this perception is actually shaped by our poor knowledge of settlement types other than the larger villa sites.

The extant archaeological evidence from the Skopje Basin and the wider study region in particular demonstrate that this pattern of individual or groups of agricultural estates and villas survived well into the 4th century. For this period there is even less evidence to rely on, as inscribed steles or altars are extremely rare in most parts of the Balkan Peninsula after the late 3rd century AD. Nevertheless on the few excavated villa complexes in the country, there is a clear evidence for 4th century occupation[491]. The partly excavated villa near the village Banjani probably dates within the period between the late 3rd and the late 4th century. The much larger corpus of excavated evidence from Bulgaria confirms that by the late 4th century, life definitely

[491] *Arheološka Karta na Republika Makedonija* vol.2, 364, 1996; K. Kepeski, 155-156, 1976.

ended on the great majority of villas in the countryside[492]. They were either completely deserted or literally squatted on and turned into small hamlets. This chronology is in accord with the dating proposed for the collected pottery finds and the date suggested for the fortification.

The patterns established in the Early Imperial period survived uninterrupted until the last quarter of the 4th century and at least for some regions in the country, the late 3rd-4th century is a period of expansion. However by this time a profound transformation was already starting to take place. In the landscape of the countryside the changes were announced by the reintroduction of low fortified hilltops[493]. In many cases the old pre-Roman fortifications, such as the one near Brazda were refortified, but a certain number were built anew. Unlike the fortifications built in later centuries, this first wave of fortification was mostly limited to the transitional hilly zone, close to the arable land and near the main roads[494]. In many examples the simple planning and the humble masonry technique have prompted researchers to conclude that a number of these forts were built on the initiative of the local communities, chiefly for reasons of security[495]. Indeed the near complete absence of surface remains on many of these forts indicates that the focus of everyday life was elsewhere. Nevertheless their appearance paves the way for the future developments. Many fortifications will be renewed and expanded during the following two centuries and on a certain portion of them, there is undeniable evidence for permanent occupation.

The small fort discovered in the second survey area is most probably part of this first wave of fortification. It isn't an isolated example in the region of Skopian Montenegro (map V_39). Apart from the abovementioned fort near Brazda, another fort was discovered about 2 kilometers east of the survey area, occupying an almost identical location. Another two forts from this period were documented near the villages Bulačani and Viniče, about 7-8 kilometers to the east. In these latter cases the forts have already retreated to the mountainside, although they are still relatively close to the arable zone. Similarly planned hill-forts have been discovered in other parts of the Skopje Basin.

Another novelty introduced during the reign of the Tetrarchs and Constantine's dynasty involved a change in the burial customs. Skeletal burial replaces cremation, inevitably initiating changes in the funerary architecture. These changes were first observed on the large city necropoleis of Stobi and Scupi, but monumental tombs and sarcophagi also appeared isolated in the countryside[496]. At least three monumental sarcophagi dated to the mid-4th century come from the wider study region[497]. They were already mentioned while discussing the epigraphic evidence. In all three cases, the sarcophagi were constructed of reused funerary steles, often cut or broken into pieces and builtin the sarcophagi. By the end of the 3rd century AD the habit of

[492] V. Dinčev, 18-20, 1997; A. G. Poulter, 241-242, ed. N. Christie, 2004; A. G. Poulter, 51-98, ed. A.G. Poulter,2007.

[493] I. Mikulčić, 2002; M. Milinkovitch, 159-192, ed. J. Henning, 2007; J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, 101-134, ed. A.G. Poulter, 2007.

[494] It must be admitted though that the true extent of this first wave of fortification is to a large degree unclear, as the dating mostly pertains to the most conspicious, usually later phases.

[495] I. Mikulčić, 64-65, 1982; J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, 107, ed. A.G. Poulter, 2007.

[496]This subject has not yet received an adequate, synthetic study; for Scupi, I. Mikulčić, 109-143, 1974; (Stobi) A. B. Wessolowsky, 97-137, eds., J. Wiseman,Dj. Mano-Zissi 1973; ("isolated" examples) V. Lilčić, Ranohristijanska zasvedena grobnica kaj s. Orman, 143-146, *Macedoniae Acta Archaeologica* 7-8, 1987; Đ. Petački, 79-88, 1997.

[497] A. Keramitčiev, Edna docnorimska grobnica od s. Pobužje, skopsko 143-148, *Živa Antika* 13/14, 1964; B. Josifovska-Dragojević, 241-249, 1974; L. Jovanova, 69-84, 2005.

erecting funerary or votive inscriptions dies out in the central Balkan provinces[498]. The fact that they used the tomb-stones of their predecessors, effectively erasing their memory, certainly suggests a definitive breach with earlier tradition. Although lacking precise information about the location of the finds, it is clear that at least one of the 4th century sarcophagi was discovered in the same locality where earlier inscribed steles were reported. The 4th century landowners in the region retained the old burial places, though they were obviously unrelated to the earlier landowners. The tombstones of the old landowning elite were merely seen as an easily accessible source of building material.

Neither the Early and Mid-Imperial funerary inscriptions nor the three fourth century sarcophagi can be related to the network of farmsteads revealed in the second survey area. The closest one of the sarcophagi was discovered at a distance of about 1 kilometer from the northeast corner of the survey. Obviously the find-spot is too distant and it could hardly belong to some of our sites, although it is quite possible that they were contemporary. Because of the low chronological resolution of the finds, it is impossible to assess the impact of the social and cultural transformations on the settlement pattern in the wider study region. But looking at the distribution of the known 4th century sarcophagi in the Skopje Basin, it is evident that the network is much sparser in comparison to the network of earlier funerary steles. This could be largely related to the character of the finds, sarcophagi fragments being more difficult to recognize than inscribed tombstones. However one shouldn't exclude the possibility that this reflects an actual change in the structure of landownership and local economy[499].

The last quarter of the 4th century marks the end of the old settlement pattern. According to the archaeological atlas and other sources, with the exception of Scupi, the inner part of the Skopje Basin was almost completely abandoned during the 5th and the 6th centuries[500]. The latest category of finds from this zone,are the abovementioned 4th century sarcophagi. As discussed in previous chapters, this seemingly radical breach with earlier settlement applies not only to the region of Skopje but to most central Balkan provinces[501]. The last two centuries of Antiquity are marked by an apparent decline and contraction of the old urban centres and an intensive campaign of fortification and refortification in the countryside. Around 50 forts have been discovered and documented, solely in the region of Skopje[502]. Their actual number is probably even greater, although not all were built anew in the 5th and 6th century AD. As one might expect, there is a considerable variety regarding size, position, planning and construction. In contrast to the forts of the late 3rd and 4th century, the new fortifications were built in mountainous regions occupying barely accessible locations, away from the major plains and valleys. And yet a number of these new fortified centres exhibit a surprisingly high level of sophistication in urban planning and construction. These were by all standards of the time urban settlements, with secured water-supply, public buildings and high-quality construction.

At the same time it seems that the old network of villas and farms was completely abandoned. For the administrative region of modern Skopje, the ratio between open settlements dated to the Roman and Late Roman Period in the archaeological atlas is 10 to 1. It should be stressed that this figure doesn't include fortifications or funerary monuments. In principle surface

[498] A. G. Poulter, 9-11, ed. A.G. Poulter, 2007.

[499] Similar tendencies have been observed in northern Bulgaria, A. Poulter, 242-243, ed. N. Christie, 2004.

[500] Excluding Scupi, only 3 open settlements are dated to Late Antiquity, none of which is located in the central parts of the basin, *Arheološka Karta na Republika Makedonija* vol. 2, 609-615, 1996.

[501] I. Mikulčić, 2002; A. Poulter, ed. 2007; M. Milinković, 159-161, ed. J. Henning, 2007.

[502] I. Mikulčić, 1982.

clusters dating to the late 4th through the 6th century shouldn't be less visible than surface clusters of pre-4th century date. On the contrary, it's been justly argued that the ceramic material of the Late Roman Period is far more obtrusive and recognizable than pottery from the Early and Mid-Imperial phases[503]. It is equally possible that some of these sites, solely known from the brief entries in the archaeological atlas were only broadly dated to the Roman Period and that they also had a Late Imperial phase. It is almost certain that in reality, the number of open rural settlements from both periods is greater, but this doesn't demean the significance of the mentioned ratio. The few open settlements dating to Late Antiquity come from the western periphery of the region, the same areas in which open settlements from the Early and Mid-Imperial periods were mostly concentrated.

The second survey area and also probably the wider study region didn't escape this tendency of nucleation and retreat. The survey showed that by the late 4th century, the network of farms occupying the entire eastern half of the survey was completely abandoned. There are no remains of intensive, residential activities dating to the 5th and 6th century AD. Judging by the number of known monumental archaeological remains, the wider region of Skopian Montenegro experienced a significant shift in the focus of settlement. On the plain at the foot of Mt. Montenegro, not more than four sites can be dated to the Late Imperial period, none of which has received a proper publication[504]. One of these sites is an Early Christian basilica, vaguely located in the southwest periphery of the region; while the other three are necropoleis dated on the basis of the characteristic cist burials. Again there exist only vague descriptions of their exact locations and the surrounding context. According to a brief entry in the archaeological atlas, one of these necropoleis is situated 1 kilometer to the north of Mirkovci, about 1.8 kilometers west of the survey area. This is very close to the location of the abovementioned *villa rustica* near Banjane and it is possible that this necropolis belonged to a rural settlement that succeeded the earlier villa. The second necropolis was accidentally discovered during a road construction in modern Pobužje, on the south periphery of the traditional core of the village and about 1.5 kilometers north of the survey area. Finally, the third necropolis is situated only 1.2 kilometers east of the latter, between the villages Pobuže and Ljubanci close to the mountain foot. According to the information available in the literature, on all three sites there were a larger numbers of burials suggesting that these were communal necropoleis.

Compared to the number of accidentally discovered monuments from the previous centuries, there is an obvious reduction. But at the same time, one has to take into account the fact that while earlier Roman steles were determined as isolated or small groups of burials, the Late Roman cists were interpreted as parts of communal necropoleis. One should also point to the new change in burial traditions, introduced with the spread of Christianity in the countryside. Being less lavish and accompanied by rare finds, the burials from this period are certainly less conspicuous than the funerary monuments from the Early and Mid Imperial Period. It is also evident that there is little continuity with earlier burial sites. If there were inscribed steles in the immediate vicinity of the Late Roman necropoleis, it is very unlikely that they would've gone unnoticed, although it is possible that earlier steles were used in the construction of the cists. All of the three necropoleis were situated close to the mountain foot, near the sites of the Late Medieval and Ottoman villages. In fact the necropolis between Pobužje and Ljubanci occupies an empty settlement niche, identical to those occupied by the rest of the villages in the region.

[503] D.K. Pettegrew, 743-784, 2007.

[504] *Arheološka Karta na Republika Makedonija*, vol. II, 375, 378, 380; I. Mikulčić, Tragi od ranohristijanski baziliki okolu Skopje, 97-123, *Godišen Zbornik na Filozofskiot Fakultet*. 33, 1981.

The central portions of the foothills, including the intensively surveyed area were apparently abandoned. Either because of security or changes in the local economy, settlement moved to the less exposed mountain foot, closer to the mountainside. This indicates that the roots of the Late Ottoman and Early Modern settlement pattern can perhaps be traced back to the period of Late Antiquity.

It is unfortunate that this thesis cannot be confirmed by a systematic research, as the entire area along the foot of Mt Montenegro is under modern housing. But a clue to the possible location of the nearest Late Roman settlement is perhaps present in the surface record of our survey area. Although there definitely lacked settlement remains from this period, there was a very thin off-site carpet, gradually becoming denser towards the northwest corner of the surveyed basin. In this respect too, it strikingly resembles the later carpets of Ottoman and Early Modern off-site debris. This thin cover of Late Roman material must have originated from a settlement situated somewhere in the direction of Kučevište. We mentioned the small chapels of St. Paraskeva, immediately to the north of the survey area and the chapel of St. Athanasius, about 600 meters from the survey's northwest corner, as potential settlement location. Knowing that the Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman off-site was generated by a settlement most probably situated beneath the present-day village, one shouldn't exclude the possibility that the Late Roman settlement was also situated at a greater distance from the survey area. This however would imply that like its Late Medieval and Ottoman successors, it was a larger nucleated settlement. It is in any case difficult to imagine a different source for this relatively widespread and even carpet of surface material. Recall that a very similar phenomenon was observed in the Sopot survey, where even a settlement smaller than one hectare produced an off-site carpet that spread over a distance of several hundred meters.

Although far from certain, the fragmented evidence points to a possible nucleation of settlement and retreat from the central portions of the foothills. Traces of 6th century occupation were discovered at the fort near Brazda, though the extent of this phase is unknown[505]. That the focus was increasingly shifting towards the mountainside is confirmed by the building of at least three new fortifications, up to several kilometers into the massif of Skopian Montenegro[506]. Two were discovered to the north of Kučevište, along a road that leads across the mountain and a third one, about 4 kilometers northeast of Ljubanci. Apart from architectural remains, there is very little surface evidence on these sites. At present they are completely covered by forest and ceramic fragments are extremely rare on the surface. The few collected fragments of tile and pottery and above all the masonry, unambiguously determine them as Late Roman. The one near Ljubanci in particular cannot be dated earlier than the 6th century[507]. These forts occupy topographic units that are strikingly similar to the ridges included in the survey area. As discussed in chapter IV, the relief of the mountain interior is basically a dramatic replica of the relief in the foothills. There is however one essential difference and this is the scarcity of arable land in the mountain interior. This implies that either the retreat to the mountain interior was related to a change in the local economy or the fortified centres weren't permanently inhabited. In this context, it is noteworthy that settlement in the mountainside is not uncommon in later periods.

[505] I. Mikulčić, 72-73, 1982.
[506] N. Čausidis, , 183-197, 1989.
[507] N. Čausidis, 187-189, t. 2a, 2b, 1989; this is clearly indicated by the masonry and the appearance of pentagonal towers.

Both archaeologists and historians that work in the central Balkan regions agree that the dense network of Late Roman fortifications came to an abrupt end by the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 7th century AD[508]. However research in the past decade on a number of sites in the Aegean and central Greece has revealed definite traces from this time-period, suggesting that on certain sites life continued well into the 7th and even the 8th century[509]. Although one has to allow for regional differences, the fact that the ceramic assemblages associated with this period are a peculiar mixture of pottery with low diagnosticity and certain forms that survive from the period of Late Antiquity warns us that the absence of evidence from these centuries could easily reflect the difficulties in recognizing this material. The complex sets of historical events and processes that brought about the sudden end of this era are well known and there is little use in repeating them. During the several centuries after the end of Antiquity, the Skopje Basin shares the fortune of the rest of the central Balkan Peninsula[510]. Archaeological and textual evidence is too scarce, even when compared to certain prehistoric periods.

In the entire administrative region of modern Skopje, only two sites have been dated to the period between the early 7th and late 9th century. In both cases the discoveries were made during excavations of earlier sites and very little is known about the extent and the exact character of the Early Medieval remains[511]. One of these sites is Roman Scupi, raising the abovementioned issue of the possible continuity of occupation on certain Late Antique settlements[512]. Near the city-baths, brief rescue excavations revealed a small concentration of pottery related to a post-Antique occupation layer. Based on stratigraphic observations, the material exhibiting close resemblance to the local Late Roman pottery production was dated to the 7th and the 8th century. The second site with remains datable to this period is situated in the central parts of the Skopje Basin, approximately 12 kilometers east of Scupi. The results of this excavation have not been fully published. Only the pottery was analyzed as a part of the small corpus of Early Medieval pottery from the region of Skopje[513]. The site was accidentally discovered in the near vicinity of a prehistoric necropolis. Unlike the material from Scupi, the pottery exhibits more significant deviations from the Late Roman traditions, although the basic forms are repeated. It is interesting to note that both sites are located not far from the Vardar Valley, in the inner Skopje Basin. They occupy gentle and fertile stretches, covered with Quaternary sediments. Based on the character of the pottery discovered, it has been suggested that these were small rural communities, but their true extent remains unknown.

There are no material remains from this period on the surface of the second survey area. As in the first survey, the period between the early 7th and the beginning of the 10th century remained elusive. Knowing the humble character of the accidentally discovered traces in Scupi, it becomes clear that more sites from this period can hardly be expected from the traditional method of field survey. Add to this the fact that even pottery experts have difficulties in

[508] V. Popović, 230-257, 1980; I. Mikulčić, 2002; A. Poulter, 223-254, ed. N. Christie, 2004.

[509] A.K. Vionis, J. Poblome, M. Waelkens, 147-165, 2009; P. Armstrong, Trade in the Eastern Mediterranean in the 8th century, 159-178, ed. M. Mango, *Byzantine Trade, 4th-12th century*, Ashgate Publishing 2009; A. K. Vionis, 570-578, J.L. Bintliff et al. 541-606, 2004-2005.

[510] J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, 130-132, ed. A.G. Poulter, 2007.

[511] B. Ristevski, Ranosrednovekovna sadova keramika od Republika Makedonija, *Vizantiiskii Vremenik* 89 (65), 2006.

[512] D. Koračević, 165, 2002; B. Ristevski, Early Medieval finds from Scupi, 71-81, *Macedonian Heritage* 20, 2002; cf. J. Bintliff, 384-387, 2012.

[513] D. Mitrevski, Praistoriska nekropola Klučka-Hipodrom kaj Skopje, 61-89, *Zbornik na Arheološki Muzej* 1, 1995; B. Ristevski, 51-52, 2004.

recognizing the material from this period, it is no wonder only a dozen sites from the entire country are dated to the Early Middle Age[514]. As the scanty findings from this period have only been recently synthesized and studied in greater details, it is possible that there is a greater number of Late Roman sites with unrecognized Early Medieval phase[515].

The number of the sites securely dated to the Middle and Late Byzantine Period in the region of Skopje indicates only a very weak and slow recovery (map V_40). Up until the 14th century, the map of archaeological remains in the Skopje Basin, including coin hoards and sacral monuments appears grossly incomplete. For the entire administrative region of modern Skopje, the archaeological atlas lists not more than 13 sites including coin hoards and vaguely dated surface remains, which could very well belong to the Early Ottoman Period. Securely dated settlement remains have been discovered only on 6 locations, four of which are fortified centres[516]. This situation doesn't correspond to the information in the written sources. By the mid 13th century, we hear not only of Skopje and the surrounding forts, but also of a number of rural settlements and monasteries. In fact according to the written documents, some of these settlements were established as early as the 11th century. After the Byzantine re-conquest of this region, in the early decades of the 11th century, Skopje became the main centre of Byzantine power in the central Balkans. The town and the wider region were also the power base of later separatist kingdoms and often changed hands between regional rulers[517].

Bearing in mind the geo-strategic importance of the region, its relative fertility and favorable climatic conditions, it is difficult to accept that the countryside in the region of Skopje was so sparsely populated prior to the 14th century. Excluding the fortified centres and sacral monuments, there are only two sites datable between the 11th and the 14th century in the entire Skopje Basin. Thus it turns out that there is hardly any increase from the Early Middle Age. One of the sites where remains from this period have been discovered is actually Scupi, though it isn't clear if there is a direct continuity with the Early Medieval phase. The Middle Byzantine remains are more substantial, including an earthen floor, a refuse pit and a number of pit-burials, dated between the late 9th and the 11th century. They were discovered on a different micro-location, but still within the urban core of ancient Scupi[518].

The second open settlement dated to this period is situated even closer to the survey area, in the western periphery of the wider study region[519]. The site is situated 800 meters northeast of the village Gluvo and 2.4 kilometers west of the survey area. The salvage excavations were limited to a group of three pits, probably dug for industrial purposes. Approximately 200 meters from the group of pits, the author mentions an agglomeration of building remains. Giving little further information, the two sites are related and identified with a village mentioned in later historical sources under the name Marušane. The researcher dated the pits to the period of the 11th and 12th century on the basis of the discovered pottery and tile. The report contained brief remarks about the excavated ceramics. Fine glazed examples were discovered alongside tile

[514] Z. Beldedovski, 45-49, *Zbornik na Štipskiot Naroden Muzej* VI, 1990; *Arheološka Karta na Republika Makedonija*, vol. II, 1996.

[515] B. Ristevski, 1035-1059, 2006.

[516] B. Babić, Wann sind die ältesten Teile der mittelalterlichen Burg Kale in Skopje gebaut, 359-364; *Actes du VIIIe Congrès international des sciences pré et protohistorique*, Beograd 1971; I. Mikulčić, 118-135, 1982; V. Lilčić, Markov Grad, Matka; ukrepen srednovekoven manastir, 268-280, *Istorija* 19-2, 1983.

[517] T. Tomoski, Skopje od XI do XIV vek, 57-74, eds. V. Mošin et al, 1975.

[518] D. Koračević, 165-173, 2002.

[519] M. Bilbija, Novi arheološki naodi od Skopje i okolinata, 134 -135, *Macedoniae Acta Archaeologica* 4, 1978.

fragments, both finding parallels among the material from the Skopje citadel. It is noteworthy that the material found in Scupi and in the second survey area was very different, almost entirely consisting of plain utilitarian and coarse ware. There is no detailed information about the size and the exact micro-location of the excavated site. It is only certain that it was situated by a local stream, close to the mountain foot. The surrounding terrain is much gentler than in the survey area.

Further evidence for pre-14th century rural settlements in the wider study region comes from the literary sources[520]. Of particular importance for the region of Skopje and Skopian Montenegro in particular are two imperial edicts dated to the middle and the end of the 13th century. These two documents describe in great details the rights and the properties of the main monastery in Medieval Skopje, St. George-Gorgos or Nikephoros. Apart from being an invaluable historical source for the agrarian relations, the social hierarchy and legal regulations, they reveal a great number of toponyms in the Skopje Basin and the surrounding regions. Both documents confirm the rights and land granted to the monastery by earlier Emperors, beginning from the founder and the first donor, the Byzantine Emperor Roman III, who reigned in the second quarter of the 11th century. Thus indirectly they inform us about the agrarian arrangements in the region of Skopje, for the period immediately after the Byzantine conquest of Skopje in 1004. The texts reveal a populated, agriculturally exploited countryside, parceled into fields, vineyards, summer and winter pastures, meadows, watermills, gardens and forests. Except for the land and villages belonging to the monastery, it is evident that a considerable portion of the land was given to the military aristocracy. This is hardly surprising knowing that the region of Skopje was on the northern periphery of the Empire, during most of the 11th and 12th century. Most important for the present study is the direct mention of the village Pobužje and of the region of Montenegro, which presents an undeniable proof that the area was inhabited and recognized as a minor administrative unit by the middle of the 11th century.

The surface archaeological evidence also indicates that the surveyed area was reoccupied sometime in the period between the 10th and the 14th century. The new settlement was many times smaller than the dispersed network of Roman farms. Its remains consisted of a tiny collection of pottery fragments, probably distributed in one larger and one smaller, ill-defined cluster. Their combined areas totaled not more than 2500 sq meters, equaling the size of the medium-sized clusters of Roman material. This was in other words a single farmstead or a small group of households. According to the surface remains, the focus of agricultural production was on the slopes and on the top of the western ridge (map V_41). These were lightly constructed dwellings, for there were no traces of building ceramics or stone rubble. We're again dealing with an ultra-thin carpet of surface material, perhaps indicating a short-lived occupation. In this context however, attention must be turned to the fact that because of the peculiarities of the cuisine and dinning practices of the time-period and the increased usage of metal vessels, Medieval and post-Medieval sites tend to produce smaller ceramic assemblages than sites from Antiquity or certain prehistoric periods[521]. One may recall the small collection of pottery fragments, which we associated with Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman Sopot. Although this settlement was five times larger than the Medieval settlement in the second survey, it produced a fairly small volume of finds.

[520] V. Mošin, 97-177, eds. V. Mošin et al, vol. 1, 1975.
[521] A. Vionis, 177-197, eds. J. Bintliff, H. Stoeger, 2009.

The extant literary sources provide a potential clue about the socio-historical character of this settlement[522]. The above-mentioned imperial edicts are very precise when describing the villages and their territories given in possession of the monastery of St. George in Skopje. In a number of instances while defining the limits of the monastic land, they talk in great details about the various types of assets that came along with certain villages (vineyards, watermills, fishing ponds, or hunting reserves) including minor, satellite hamlets. While the names of larger central villages have often survived until the present-day, the memory of these smaller satellites has almost been completely erased. Only in a few, rare cases were their names preserved in the local toponomy. One should also point to the cases where the ruler gives the specific rights to a landowner to settle small communities of dependent farmers on his own estate. Such small communities could quietly disappear, leaving only faint remains in the surface records.

Regardless of whether the discovered cluster of Medieval pottery came from a separate settlement unit or a larger settlement's satellite, from a long-term perspective it seems to herald a return to the dispersed settlement scheme, characteristic for the Early and Mid-Imperial Period. Apart from the brief report on the rescue excavations near Gluvo, there is very little archaeological evidence to support this thesis. The approximate location of a third village situated in the foothills is revealed by local toponyms, though we don't know if it predated the 14th century. It was situated somewhere along the lower course of the Jazirski Stream, at a distance of over two kilometers from the mountain foot and the modern village Ljuboten. The location is very similar to the Middle Byzantine remains near Gluvo: both sites occupy locations on the valley floors, near the confluence of two streams.

On the basis of the extant historical and topographic data, it is nearly certain that by the early 14th century the majority of the villages in the region were firmly established at their present-day locations. Seven of the ten presently extant villages are mentioned under the same or very similar names in the historical sources of the time[523]. The beginning of the 14th century marks a new era in the demographic history of the country. Historically this is the period of expansion of the Serbian Kingdom[524]. Already by 1282 Skopje and the surrounding regions were conquered by the Serbian King Milutin. By the end of the 13th century, the army of the Serbian King reached Thessaly and the plain of Thessalonica. After long and uncertain negotiations, the Byzantine Emperor transferred the land along the Upper Vardar as a dowry to King Milutin. This historical event is of a great importance for Skopje and the wider study region in particular, because after the treaty with Byzantium in 1299, the Serbian King will gradually begin to move the royal court to Skopje, closer to his new ally. Discovering the newly conquered land completely ravaged by the constant warfare in the last decades of the 13th century, we are told that the king started an intensive building campaign, particularly focused on the city of Skopje and on the surrounding regions[525]. According to his biography, over 40 churches were either restored or built anew during his reign and particularly in the period between 1300 and 1321. Although the actual extent of this building campaign remains dubious, through the study of inscriptions, historical documents, studies of architecture and fresco-decoration, it's been

[522] V. Mošin, 124-146, eds. V. Mošin et al, vol 1, 1975.

[523] V. Mošin, 128-129, 263-324; eds. V. Mošin et al, vol 1, 1975; these references in the historical documents are summarized by J. Trifunovski, 31-34, 1971.

[524] T. Tomoski, 60-63, eds. V. Mošin et al, vol. 1, 1975; G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State,* 1957.

[525] V. Mošin, 309-337, eds. V. Mošin et al, vol. 2, 1977.

ascertained that at least a dozen churches were built in this period, both in Skopje and in its surroundings.

Two, possibly three of these churches were built in the wider study region. These are the parish church in Čučer, the monastic church St. Nikita, near Banjane and possibly a small chapel near Kučevište[526]. The church of St. Nikita near Banjane is particularly important, because it is mentioned in an extant edict of the Byzantine Emperor Michael IX, where the Emperor confirms the rights and land given to the monastery by his brother in law, King Milutin[527]. This authentic document presents a precious historical source, pertaining directly to the region of Skopian Montenegro. It is here that we for the first time hear of the villages Banjane, Kučevište and its unnamed summer camp and the abovementioned village Lopušane, near the Jazirski Stream. All these villages, along with the people and the land were given in the possession of the restored monastery of St. Nikita, later, all together transferred to Chilander on Mt. Athos. Thus in essence almost the entire region of Skopian Montenegro was a monastic land, shared between the monasteries of St. George in Skopje (a monastery that had earlier possessions in this region, including a portion of the village Pobužje), St. Nikita near Banjane (owning the greatest portion of the land) and the newly built monastery of the Holy Archangels in Prizren, Kosovo (built slightly later and given one half of Kučevište and its summer camp). Only the villages Ljubanci and Ljuboten, the easternmost pair of villages in the region were definitely in the hands of the military aristocracy.

It is equally important to note that the edict had to be issued no later than the first decades of the 14th century, which implies that these settlements were established by the beginning of the century. Whether they already existed prior to the Serbian conquest or were newly colonized communities of serfs is impossible to know without archaeological research. In the historical sources there are no direct mentions of colonizing activity[528]. The only indisputable fact is that a significant portion of the military aristocracy and the monastic communities came from the old core of the Serbian Kingdom, northern Kosovo, the western parts of present-day Serbia and the east of Bosnia and Herzegovina. More archaeological data are needed in order to determine if the beginning of the 14th century saw the establishment of a new settlement pattern in the region or it merely revitalized the existing network of hamlets and villages. The fact that so many of the country's pre-Ottoman monuments date to the 14th century could simply reflect the fact that this was the last phase in which fortifications and lavish monastic complexes were built. Nevertheless the considerable difference in the number of archaeological sites dated prior to and after 1300 cannot be wholly attributed to external factors.

The archaeological evidence available from the wider study region, including the survey results demonstrate that the old Middle-Byzantine network of settlements wasn't completely renewed during the 14th century. Excavated material from the site Marušane near Gluvo, on the western periphery of the foothills is dated no later than the second half of the 12th century. In the survey area itself, the finds that can be securely dated to the end of the Byzantine and the Early Ottoman periods rarely accompany the assemblage broadly dated to the Middle Age. This

[526] S. Nikolovska, Izgradeni i obnoveni manastiri i crkvi od kralot Milutin, 509-519, eds. V. Mošin et al, vol. 2, 1977.

[527] V. Mošin, 317-324, eds. V. Mošin et al, vol. 1, 1975.

[528] This is implied, though never explicitly stated in modern historical studies. As pointed out in one of these studies, the campaign of founding or renewing abandoned monasteries could have been one of the crucial instruments of installing new monastic centres and legally expropriate land captured by arms, V. Mošin, 168-169, eds. V. Mošin, et al, vol. 1, 1975.

circumstance largely influenced the dating of the Medieval assemblage; fragments that belonged to some of its constituent fabric groups never appeared alongside the Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman off-site collections. It presents the base for the assumption that by the time of the 14th century, the surveyed terrain definitely became a part of the settlement territories of Kučevište and Pobužje and that the hypothetical satellites pre-date the 14th century and King Milutin's building campaign. It is in any instance clear that the small Medieval farm or a hamlet presented the last settlement phase in the survey area. Although the exact date remains uncertain, it was in all probability a satellite of some larger settlement, which implies that the survey area was part of a larger settlement's territory even prior to the 14th century.

Judging by the locations of the oldest village churches, the major settlements in Skopian Montenegro didn't suffer considerable displacements after being incorporated into the Medieval Serbian Kingdom in the late 13th century (map V_42). As already explained the network of fortified towns, monastic centres and villages established during the 14th century will survive the turbulent decades of the Ottoman conquest and prosper during the first three centuries of Ottoman rule. To be sure there were significant settlement and population displacements in certain regions of the country, but specifically for the region of Skopian Montenegro, the Ottoman conquest of Skopje didn't introduce radical changes regarding the continuity of population, settlement pattern or agrarian relations. The rights of ownership were merely transferred from the monasteries of St. Nikita and St. George to the newly erected mosques in Skopje. In fact according to the historical evidence available, it is very possible that the monastery of St. George retained its autonomy until the mid-decades of the 15th century, 40 years after the conquest of Skopje.

The most direct testimony to the wealth and size of the villages in Skopian Montenegro during the Early Ottoman Period comes from the official, exhaustive censuses of the 15th and 16th century[529]. According to the earliest census available, dated to the middle decades of the 15th century, the majority of the villages in the region featured between 30 and 60 households, ranking them as medium-sized villages. Only Banjane stands apart with over 100 houses, though in this case it seems that the population of the neighbouring villages Čučer and Gornjane were subsumed under Banjane. These two villages are not mentioned separately in this census, although it is clear that Čučer was established prior to the Ottoman conquest. In the next exhaustive census for the years 1467/1468, there is an evident population increase in nearly all villages in the region. Pobužje almost reaches the maximum of around 60 households, while Banjane, along with Čučer and Gornjane counted 158 families. Other larger, presently active villages, such as Brazda and Mirkovci are mentioned for the first time in the 15th century. Knowing the size of the latter, it is likely that these two villages existed prior to the Ottoman conquest, but weren't mentioned in the imperial edicts, because they belonged to the military aristocracy. But the real population explosion happened in the late 15th and the early 16th century, when the number of houses in some of the villages more than tripled[530]. It is unfortunate that the exhaustive censuses from this century are yet to be fully translated and published. According to the brief remarks in the publications of the earlier 15th century censuses, Kučevište and Mirkovci had over 100 families by the first quarter of the 16th century. From the information available in

[529] M. Sokolovski, A. Stojanovski,1973; M. Sokolovski, 534, 537-538,1971;M. Sokolovski, Vakafi i vakafski imoti vo Skopje i skopsko, vo XV i XVI vek, 42, 51 *Prilozi VIII, Makedonska Akademija na Nauki i Umetnosti*, 1977.

[530] Cf. J.L. Bintliff, 193-224; eds. A. Hurst, A. Schachter, 1996; J. Bintliff, 437-441, tab. 20.1, 2012.

the published studies, one cannot be certain if this number refers solely to these villages or it includes the population in the neighbouring dependent hamlets.

From the Early Ottoman censuses we also learn that the settlement network in the wider study region was more extensive. Apart from the major villages, situated along the foot of the mountain, there were an unknown number of smaller, long-since abandoned villages. Mostly thanks to the ethnographic studies carried out in the early part of the last century, it is now clear that the majority of these settlements were situated in the mountainside[531]. Faint traces are preserved in the local toponomy and in the memory of older inhabitants. These villages were situated on the small mountain plateaus or on the gentler ridges, usually near natural springs. The closest example is the village Brodec, situated 3 kilometers northeast of Pobužje, deep into the mountain massif. The ruins of another deserted village, known from the historical sources and oral tradition as Zgurovce can still be seen on the ridge that rises above Ljubanci. It is situated less than 2 kilometers from the latter, but it is mentioned separately in the 15th century Ottoman censuses, counting around 20 houses. Toponyms hiding the names of old villages can also be found above Kučevište and Banjane and further into the mountainside. It is certain that some of these settlements existed prior to the Ottoman conquest. The fact that they are not mentioned as separate settlements in the exhaustive censuses, perhaps suggests that they were treated as dependent hamlets of the larger villages at the mountain foot, Kučevište and Ljubanci. It is noteworthy that the micro-locations of these mountain hamlets are very similar to those occupied by the villages in the foothills. They are regularly positioned on the top or the upper portions of the ridges, usually facing southwest. The Late Roman forts also exhibited similar orientation, though they were obviously located on less accessible, narrower micro-topographic units.

Only one village mentioned in the 15th century censuses can be located on the plain at the foot of the mountain. This is the abovementioned village by the Jazirski Stream, situated about 2 kilometers southwest of Ljubanci and Ljuboten. According to the local toponomy there is a place called Lopušani near the confluence of the Jazirski and the Pobuški Stream. A village with this name is indeed mentioned in the 14th century sources, but it never appears in the Ottoman censuses. Instead there is a village called Jazirce, obviously situated somewhere along the Jazirski Stream. Possibly Lopušani changed its name into Jazirce after the Ottoman conquest, as the valley is too small to host two separate communities. On the other hand the village known as Marušane in the local oral tradition, near Gluvo, doesn't appear in the Ottoman censuses. It could have survived as a dependent hamlet of its neighbour, though as discussed it was partly excavated and dated a couple of centuries prior to the Ottoman conquest.

The list of taxes paid in cash or kind indicates a varied agricultural economy[532]. Apart from the usual taxes paid for cultivating cereals, garden cultures and fruits, taxes were paid for the raising of sheep, pigs and silkworms. Taxes were also paid for at least 5 water-mills and for wine production. A mid-16th century document informs us that the inhabitants of Kučevište were skilled builders and craftsmen. They were largely responsible for the building of an aqueduct, which not only fed Skopje and its baths with running water, but also irrigated the fields, vineyards and gardens surrounding the town. In fact in another document from 1568, the highest juridical official for the region of Skopje made the inhabitants of Kučevište permanently

[531] S. Tomić, 420-429, 1905; J. Trifunovski, Tri isčezla Srednjovekovna sela, 156-157, *Glasnik Srpskog Geografskog Društva* I/2, 1970.

[532] M.Sokolovski,A Stojanovski, 281-282, 1973; M.Sokolovski, 534, 538, 1971.

responsible for the water-supply and irrigation of Skopje and its surroundings. In return they were relieved from a number of taxes and obligations[533].

This brief overview of the settlements of Skopian Montenegro in the first couple of centuries of Ottoman rule clearly demonstrates that the pattern established in the 14th century experienced further development and possible extensions. The bulk of the population was concentrated in the villages, forming a chain along the mountain foot. Only one settlement can be located in the central parts of the foothills, at its southern periphery. Finally, a smaller portion of the population lived in small hamlets, situated deep into the mountain massif. This second known reoccupation of the mountain after the Late Roman Period was certainly related to the local pastoralist economy. The rugged terrain surrounding the mountain hamlets offers very little arable land and this circumstance supports the scanty literary evidence for local semi-nomadic herding. These hamlets must have developed from temporary, spring and summer camps. They are regularly positioned by the local mountain roads and near mountain-springs. Immediate access to water would have been of utmost importance for the stationing of larger herds[534].

The complexity and the integrity of the Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman settlement pattern in the wider study region are apparent. This network of settlements encompassed a fairly large territory, featuring diverse relief and natural resources. In contrast to the hamlets from the first survey area, these communities were bound to share a larger territory with few physical boundaries. In this light it is easier to understand why the communities inhabiting Skopian Montenegro formed one of the earliest administrative units in the country, nearly becoming a separate ethnic group.

It was surprising to discover that by the middle of the 16th century, the majority of the settlements of Skopian Montenegro were by all standards medium and large-sized villages, some approaching the size of Classical Greek poleis. Banjane, Mirkovci and Kučevište all had near or over 100 households by the early decades of the 16th century. In fact some of these settlements like Pobužje were more populous in the 16th than in the early 20th century. Despite the richness in agricultural and other resources of the wider study region, it was unexpected to find such a large concentration of rural population. Unlike the settlements in the first survey area, these are communities of a higher rank, sufficiently large to allow for intermarriage between members of the same community. Social cohesion and order were partly achieved through horizontal sub-divisions, reflected in the existence of satellite hamlets and separate quarters or *mahalas* within the limits of the central settlements[535].

These large communities of farmers and herdsmen left their mark outside the narrower settlement areas, in the surface record of the fields at the foot of the mountain. Among the vast amounts of off-site debris spread across the entire survey area, there was a small percentage of finds that could be dated prior to the 18th century. They too were found dispersed across most of the survey area, but the carpet of finds became visibly denser in the northwest survey quarter and especially on the basin's floor, on the fields by the Skopje-Kučevište asphalt road. As with the Late Roman finds, its distribution pattern clearly pointed to the settlement that generated this material. This was the village Kučevište. Consisting of over 100 houses already towards the end of the 15th century, it was a true giant even in comparison to many modern villages. The size and the position of this village make it the obvious source of the off-site carpet discovered in the second survey. It is noteworthy that Pobužje, the smaller eastern neighbour of Kučevište left a

[533] M. Sokolovski, 50-51, 1977.
[534] J. Trifunovski, 34, 1971; C. Chang, P.A. Tourtellote, 249-264, 1993.
[535] J.L.Bintliff, 511, ed. G. Barker, 1999.

humbler mark in the surface record on the eastern ridge. Bearing in mind the very large population concentrated in these villages, the discovery of a thin off-site carpet dating to the Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman Period is not totally out of place.

Somewhat paradoxically, beginning from the 17th century there are very few published historical accounts pertaining to the wider study region. The corpus of published Ottoman censuses belongs almost entirely to the period of the 15th and 16th century. It is particularly unfortunate that we know so little about demographic developments in the period of the last decades of the 17th and the early decades of the 18th century. According to later historiography and the oral historical traditions recorded by ethnographers at the very beginning of the 20th century, this was a period of radical demographic changes, commonly related to the aftermath of the Austro-Ottoman Wars of the late 17th century[536]. The changes were brought about by two complementary migratory movements. The first was the exodus of an unknown portion of the local population in the years following the end of the Austro-Ottoman war in 1689. Fearing reprisals, families that allied with the Austrians against the Ottoman authorities retreated with the Austrian army beyond the Danube. Although this is confirmed by written evidence, the real effects of the migration can only be guessed at without the precise information of the official censuses or archaeological data. The other migratory process allegedly started about a century later and lasted throughout the first half of the 19th century. It's been maintained that the vacuum left by the earlier exodus was filled-in by a wave of settlers from northern Albania and Kosovo. Being largely a transhumant population, the new colonists were particularly opting for the lush mountain pastures. By the early decades of the 19th century, they reached the mountains west of Veles, significantly changing the ethnic and religious composition of the population in many regions of the country, especially in the northwest. In Skopian Montenegro, most affected were the small communities that inhabited the mountainside, such as Zgurovce or Brodec. But in principle the migration shook one of the bases of the regional economy and affected all communities in Skopian Montenegro. Maintaining the large flocks of sheep was impossible without free access to mountain pastures. Pressed by the new migrants, they were forced to abandon the high mountain pastures along the main mountain ridge, while the old population concentrated in the villages at the foot of the mountain.

By the beginning of the 20th century, the importance of sheep and goat herding had visibly lost its significance in the local economy, although the end of this tradition came only with the industrialization of the country and the radical socio-economic reforms in the middle decades of the last century. One cannot fully discredit the local oral traditions as it is undeniable that by the second half of the 19th century, the villages in the central part of the mountain massif were 100% Albanian and the small villages on the southern slopes of the mountain, mentioned in Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman sources were completely abandoned by the beginning of the 19th century[537]. In all probability the semi-nomadic herding retained some role in the local economy, but because of the tensions with the competing transhumant population of Albanian settlers, the focus was slowly shifting towards the foothills and the Skopje Basin[538].

But in spite of the declining political and economic situation during the last centuries of Ottoman rule, the villages of Skopian Montenegro were teeming with inhabitants towards the end of the 19th century. With nearly 200 houses in 1905, Kučevište was probably the largest

[536] J. Trifunovski, 22, 1971; S. Tomić, 453, 1905.
[537] S. Tomić, 450-454, 1905; J. Trifunovski, 34-46, 1971.
[538] J. Trifunovski, 51, 1971.

village in the Skopje Basin and one of the largest in the country[539]. According to the same census, although situated only 2 and 3 kilometers away, both Mirkovci and Ljubanci had over 100 households. In fact population growth in the region will continue unchecked until the second half of the 20th century. The two Balkan and World Wars apparently had no long-term negative effects. As in most other parts of the country, the decline of these old rural communities begins only in the second half of the last century. However because of their long history and rich tradition and because of the proximity to Skopje, the villages of Skopian Montenegro didn't share the fortune of the majority of villages in the country. They are still one of the largest rural settlements in the Skopje Basin, although population growth has evidently come to a halt in the past several decades.

These large communities increasingly relying on the agricultural exploitation of the farmland in the foothills produced a very dense off-site carpet. The density of artifacts datable to the last couple of centuries was further enhanced by the positioning of the villages above the plough-zone, a circumstance that facilitated the transportation of manure to the overexploited fields[540]. The Late Ottoman-Early Modern off-site carpet confuses with its sheer amount, density variations across the fields and finally, with the variety and quality of the finds. Almost 12 000 fragments of pottery and tile were recorded over an area of 1 sq kilometer, lying at a distance of up to 2.5 kilometers from the centre of the village. Such vast quantities of discarded material were unexpected, but they truly reflect the very large size, the convenient positioning and the wealth of the villages in the wider study region. In all likelihood, they had both developed their own ceramic production and enjoyed a ready access to ceramic goods produced in Skopje. The landscape that presently characterizes the flat portions of Skopian Montenegro, with its dense field divisions, tall hedges and terrace walls could very well be the product of this last phase of occupation. The historic and ethnographic evidence, the appearance of the modern landscape and the portion of the surface record revealed through surface artifact survey are all in unison about the developments in the wider study region during the period of the last two centuries.

That this last period of occupation in the wider study region was indeed marked by an increased pressure on the natural resources is finally suggested by a rough estimate of the region's carrying capacity. Looking at the agricultural land available in the foothills of Skopian Montenegro, one has to conclude that the agricultural resources were truly being stretched to their limits. With not more than 35 sq kilometers of arable land, Skopian Montenegro could sustain about 750 households, assuming that the size of the average estate was in the region of 5-5.5 hectares and that on average one household included about 7 individuals. On the other hand, the official censuses list over 1000 households in this region at the end of the 19th century. It is thus evident that arable land was becoming a precious resource and that the average size of individual estates was closer to 4 hectares. In addition one has to account for the fact that

[539] J. Trifunovski, tab. 4, 1971.

[540] There is an explicit testimony to the importance attached to manure by the local farming communities in the ethnographic work of S. Tomić, 433, 1905; explaining the logic behind the villages' locations at the very edge that separates the foothills from the mountainside, the author writes: "This is because of purely economic reasons. The peasant who apart from farming engages in herding avoids the plains, i.e. the central parts of the agricultural land and settles the fields' edges, at the mountain foot, so that both the fields and the mountain are at an equal distance… In these villages it is also easier to bring the manure to the fields. The village is above the line of the fields and then the manure is simply smeared downhill rather than being carried uphill. And the rain itself washes away the manure that accumulates around the houses spreading it over the fields and meadows." This last detail about the "manure that accumulates around the houses" clearly implies that household rubbish could easily be included in the manure. Cf. H. Forbes, 163-64, ed. R. Jones, 2012.

throughout the Ottoman Period, a considerable percentage of the agricultural yields from this region went to the secular and religious feudal lords in Skopje. Thus the large communities in the study region had to live off an even narrower subsistence base. During the Early Ottoman Period this scarcity of land was compensated by the exploitation of extensive mountain pastures and other resources in the mountainside, but in the last couple of centuries the local communities had to find alternative sources of existence, including increased specialization in crafts and trade and temporary migration to the urban centres in the region and abroad[541]. In the light of this evidence it is much easier to understand the appearance of such a dense carpet of discarded ceramic artifacts from the last couple of centuries. Enhancing the fertility of the soils was essential for securing at least an average yield. This practice continues to the present day, with pottery gradually disappearing from everyday use and the rubbish heaps and synthetic fertilizers partly replacing organic manure.

With so few periods represented in the surface record, it is obviously difficult to observe a clear long-term pattern in the history of settlement in the second survey area. Even more so than in the first survey area, in this specific geographic setting it is nearly impossible to understand the developments in one section of the region without having at least indirect information about the developments in other parts. Evidently one could say that the settlement history of the second survey area consisted of brief episodes of ephemeral occupation, alternating with long intervals during which the basin was abandoned or became the agricultural territory of a larger, nucleated settlement. Remaining unclear is how this dynamics relates to the developments in the wider study region, which are very vaguely known. In the majority of cases it is impossible to say if the settlement remains discovered are independent units of a wider, dispersed network or satellites of larger settlements. Even for the Roman Period for which we have the largest corpus of archaeological evidence from both the survey area and the wider region of Skopian Montenegro, a certain number of issues were left undecided. Are we seeing a peculiar form of dispersed settlement or a concentration of individual farmsteads representing a segment of a wider network? What was the community's relation with the citizens of Scupi, some of which we know held property in the wider area? On the other hand, only for two, possibly three periods does the surface evidence indicate that the episodes of abandonment were in fact periods when the survey area became the agricultural territory of a larger nucleated settlement. This obviously happened during the Late Ottoman-Early Modern Period, but also during the Late Byzantine-Early Ottoman and also possibly during the Late Roman Period. There were no remains of permanent occupation dating to these three periods in the surface record, but the appearance of more or less evenly dispersed off-site carpets suggested that there had to exist a larger nucleated settlement, situated not far away from the survey area. Whether the survey area was occupied or turned into an agricultural land, data from the surrounding regionsare crucial for understanding the developments in the intensively surveyed area. Much time and energy was spent in trying to synthesize the scarce archaeological data from the wider study region and the Skopje Basin in order to relate the developments at different regional scales. It is possible to infer some very general conclusions, but without more detailed evidence from the wider study region, they remain in the realm of working hypotheses and speculations.

One thing in common for all three periods of settlement is the size and character of the basic settlement unit. Whether it stood isolated or as a part of a wider network, the basic settlement unit never exceeded the rank of a farm or a small hamlet. As discussed earlier,

[541] S. Tomić, 462-464, 1905.

throughout its entire settlement history, the survey area never achieved the status of a stable settlement locus. It almost did during the Roman Period, but even then the area was inhabited by less than a dozen families. There never developed a larger, nucleated settlement. As we'll see in the concluding chapter, this was to a great degree predetermined by the specifics of the regional geography rather than by the lack of certain resources or the limited carrying capacity of the region. The second survey area was certainly not deficient in space or agricultural resources, but its place in the wider regional context made it a settlement locus of a lower rank. The surrounding settlement loci were preferred for a number of reasons and because of their proximity and the lack of significant topographic barriers, the survey area often became part of the territory of the larger neighbouring settlements. Interestingly even in the first survey area, which retained a level of stable settlement niche throughout most of the periods during the last 7000 years, we observed a surprising level of continuity regarding settlement size.

The basic cycle of development in the second survey area essentially consisted of transformations from vacant territory/agricultural land, to dependent farms or hamlets and to a tight network of (independent?) farms. The latter level wasn't exceeded and it is possible that it represented a unique episode in the local settlement history, rather similar to the Late Iron Age expansion in the first survey area. The surface evidence clearly demonstrated that for the greater part of its history, the second survey area was either a vacant land or a part of another settlement's territory. The brief episodes of occupation always coincided with major socio-economic and demographic transformations in the wider study region and in the Skopje Basin. Knowing the very high level of integration of Skopian Montenegro and its proximity to a larger civic centre, this is hardly a surprise.

As pointed out, a number of issues remain completely unanswered or only vaguely determined. More evidence is needed in order to securely determine the character of the occupation during the Middle or the Late Byzantine periods. It is impossible to decide if the small hamlet belongs to a time when the chain of nucleated settlements at the mountain foot was not fully established or if it was a short-lived satellite of Kučevište's predecessor. A more precise dating of the finds will certainly help settle this issue. Judging solely by the location of the site, its size and character, it seems that this wasn't a return to the Roman network of dispersed farms, but rather an early phase of the Late Medieval and Ottoman network of villages and hamlets. It is also unclear if this pattern had a predecessor during the Late Roman Period; the survey data and the scanty information from the wider study region suggest that this could very well be the case. Finally, apart from the issues surrounding the socio-historical character of the group of Roman farms, we don't know if this was a unique episode or if it had a distant precedent in prehistory. The faint traces of prehistoric occupation merely confirm that the second survey area was never occupied by a stable, nucleated settlement. These and other questions pave the way for future research, which unfortunately has to be focused on one of the presently occupied settlement niches. We suspect that it is these locations that attracted human settlers in this region during most periods of its settlement history. If this hypothesis proves correct, it will present a striking testimony to the stability of settlement locations in the regions along the Vardar Valley.