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## Abstract

The prevalent type of archaeological field surveys in the Republic of Macedonia has ensured that only a smaller percentage of the archaeological sites visible on the surface were included in the archaeological map of the country. Up until now there were no systematically gathered field data pertaining to the size, positioning and intra-site organization of non-architectural surface remains. The two small-scale and hyper-intensive surface artifact surveys presented in this study were the first glimpse of the type and distribution of settlement on a parish level and in a rural context, in the regions along the Vardar Valley. Not attempting to offer a representative coverage of the region as a whole or of certain types of micro-geographic entities, the surveys were rather concentrated on 1) reconstructing the long-term history of individual settlements (by means of highly intensive and systematic survey coverage and careful study of the ceramic fabrics); 2) understanding the integral set of habitation practices (by adopting a site-less approach in the interpretation of the surface artifact scatters) and 3) exploring the type of micro-topographic elements preferred by the local farming communities (the concept of settlement niche). The study and interpretation of the field data faced us with the problem of understanding the settlement dynamic on a micro-level, but it also brought up a series of interpretative and methodological problems inherent to all studies of surface archaeological material.