Defters (properly, *tahrir defterleri*) are tax records from the Ottoman Empire. Defters serve as sources for many kinds of historical research such as population estimates and processes of confession change. Information from 138 years of defters (1445 to 1583) was used to explore settlement patterns in the Republic of Macedonia, particularly changes such as establishing and abandoning villages. The novelty here was combining the defter records with a map, using GIS tools as a basis for calculating settlement density.

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