

FORENSIC ASSISTANCE PROJECT

Consultant Report 1999-031

Kalinovik I

Federation Commission on Missing Persons – Bosniak Side

24 - 25 June 1999

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December 1999

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Financed with support of International Commission on Missing Persons

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Summary of Events

On 24 and 25 June 1995, the Federation Commission on Missing Persons – Bosniak Side recovered the remains of 14 individuals from two of three investigated sites near Kalinovik.

At Kalinovik I, the Commission was searching for the remains of three civilians from a nearby village. They recovered a minimum of three individuals from a single mass grave. The remains were skeletonized and partially commingled. Some of the elements may have been burned.

At Kalinovik II, a minimum of ten skeletonized individuals were recovered from a single mass grave. These were interred side-by-side with a small amount of commingling where bodies overlapped. The scattered, skeletonized remains of a minimum of one individual were recovered from the ground surface down a nearby hill.

No human remains were recovered from the Borovac site.

A Forensic Consultant from Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) was present for all recovery work at the Kalinovik II and Borovac sites. No Consultant was present for the final removal of remains from the Kalinovik I site.

No PHR representative was present for postmortem examinations of the remains recovered from these sites. No summary report on the findings from these examinations had been forwarded to PHR at the time report writing.

Summary of Recovery Operation Results

Site	Grid Coordinate	Minimum Number of Individuals
Kalinovik I	34T BP 973E 183N	3
Kalinovik II	34T BP 974E 184N	11
Borovac	34T BP 988E 283N	0

(Editor's note: In 1999, it was agreed that the "State Commission on Missing Persons (Bosniak Side)," and the "Federal Commission on Missing Persons – Croat Side" would eventually be referred to as the "Federation Commission on Missing Persons – Bosniak Side" and "Federation Commission on Missing Persons – Croat Side," respectively. For purposes of simplicity and clarity, any reference to either of these commissions in 1999 reports will use the "Federation" names.)

Participants and Observers (not necessarily inclusive)

Federation Commission on Missing Persons – Bosniak Side

BEŠIĆ Sejo	Crime Technician
DOBRAČA Dr. Ilijas	Forensic Pathologist, Sarajevo
HRNJIĆ Saudin	Autopsy Assistant, Sarajevo
KOSO Sejid	Army, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
ODOBAŠIĆ Jasmin	Member, Sarajevo
TARIĆ Ermin	Crime Technician
Laborers	

Republika Srpska (RS) Commission on Tracing Prisoners and Missing Persons

ŠKRBA Slobodan	Member
Local Police	

Office of the High Representative (OHR)

JOHANSSON Agneta	Head, Exhumations Department (24 June)
KULJUH Klaudija	Special Assistant
MAGIERA Mathew	Exhumations Officer, Sarajevo
VIZINA Daniel	Exhumations Officer, Mostar (25 June)

Physicians for Human Rights (PHR)

H. JAŠARAGIĆ Edin	Field Assistant
KOMAR Dr. Debra	Forensic Consultant (25 June)
STUART Dr. Gary	Forensic Consultant
TORLAKOVIĆ Azur	Field Assistant (25 June)
YORK Heather	Forensic Consultant

Others

French and German Peace Stabilization Force (SFOR) Personnel
Television (including OBN) and other media crews

Recovery Operations

On 24 and 25 June 1999, the Federation Commission on Missing Persons recovered the remains of at least 14 individuals from sites near Kalinovik, Republika Srpska. The Kalinovik I and II sites are approximately 2.5 km southeast of Kalinovik on the Slivlja topographic map (Sheet 2781 I; Edition 7-DMA; Series M709; Scale 1:50,000; Figure 1). The Borovac site is approximately 10 km northeast of Kalinovik on the Trnovo topographic map (Sheet 2782 II; Edition 7A-DMA; Series M709; Scale 1:50,000; Figure 2).

On 24 June, the proceedings were delayed because although SFOR representatives intended to meet the convoy at the first site, the judge for the Bosniak side did not want to travel into RS territory without an SFOR escort. After lengthy negotiations with OHR, Agneta Johansson, Head of Exhumations, demanded that the convoy leave for the site. The judge acquiesced, but he was clearly not happy. The argument flared up again throughout the day.

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Kalinovik I

The first site visited on 24 June was on the west shoulder of a gravel road, an eastern branch off of National Route 18 (International Route E762) at grid coordinate 34T BP 973E 183N. The Commission expected to find the remains of three civilians from a nearby village. According to witness information, the bodies may have been burned before burial.

The Commission team first investigated a 2 m X 1 m area marked by a pile of stacked, cut branches. Crime technicians surrounded the pile of branches with police tape (Photo 1) and took photographs. Dr. Dobrača then directed seven laborers to dig with shovels through loose, disturbed soil and garbage beneath the woodpile. They dug four holes to an approximate depth of 20 cm, at which point they hit a rock layer. A backhoe was then used to dig a trench, 5 m long and 0.75 m deep, across the area that had been covered by the branches. No evidence of a burial was encountered.

At the suggestion of one of the local police officers, the backhoe was used to trench a garbage-strewn area 5 m to the south of the first area. At an approximate depth of 1.5 m, human bones were encountered. Four laborers dug with shovels until the remains of at least three individuals were exposed in a 2 m X 1 m pit. The remains were completely skeletonized, and some elements appeared to be burned. There was some commingling of elements where the bodies overlapped.

The laborers were directed to expose directly over the remains with shovels (Photo 2), resulting in a deplorable amount of commingling of elements. In addition, they were not at all careful of where they stepped, most likely resulting in damage to elements. One laborer attempted to pick through the backdirt on one side of the pit, but his colleagues kept throwing more backdirt on him; he quickly became discouraged and quit.

The PHR Consultants (Stuart and York) left this site before the remains were fully exhumed to go with main team to Kalinovik II.

Kalinovik II

On 24 and 25 June, the Commission recovered at least 11 individuals from two areas at grid coordinate 34T BP 974E 184N. Upon the team's arrival at a lightly wooded area, a bleached innominate was visible on the ground surface in a clearing (Photo 3). The Commission expected to find a mass grave at this site, but no other information was provided to the PHR representatives.

Five meters to the south of the first surface-lying remains, team members found a right innominate and left femur lying on the surface. The femur had some animal gnawing at the articular ends. (These elements may have been dug up from the shallow mass grave by animals. However, the subsequently exhumed remains were not examined closely enough at the time of exhumation to determine whether any of the sets were missing these elements.)

Crime Technicians taped off the perimeter of the clearing. They surveyed the entire area thoroughly with a metal detector, finding a good deal of evidence such as cartridge cases and slugs (Photo 4). These were marked with pinflags for photo documentation. During this procedure, many of the SFOR soldiers were allowed to mill about the site area, picking up cartridge cases.

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When this survey was completed, mid afternoon of 24 June, the team began excavating with the backhoe around the location of the first surface remains. Sejid Koso, Jasmin Odobašić and Dr. Dobrača all tried to direct the backhoe at the same time, resulting in a bit of confusion. At about this time, two television crews arrived at the site. Some of the interviewers and camera operators were vexatiously aggressive in their pursuit of interviews and shots.

While the backhoe was exposing the mass graves, a few team members left to collect surface remains scattered over an area at least 20 m X 20 m down a nearby hill. Mr. Koso, Mr. Magiera, and a few laborers gathered the remains, and the PHR Consultant (York) was asked to determine the completeness of the collection. A minimum of one individual was assembled (Photo 5) and found to be fairly complete, especially given the area over which the remains had been scattered. The Consultant determined that the remains were those of a female over the age of 60. There was a circular defect perforating the left innominate.

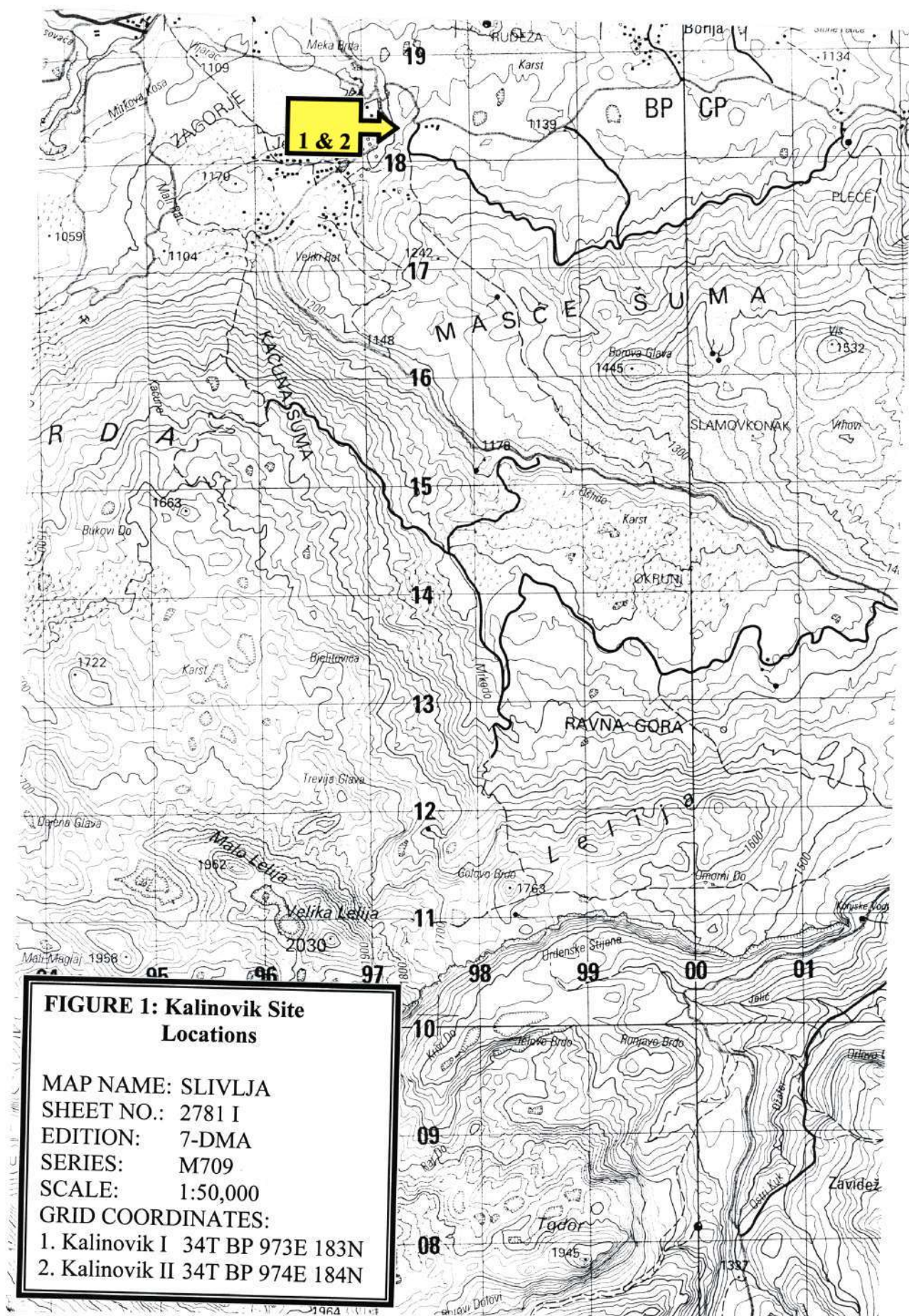
When work ended for the day, the partially exposed remains in the mass grave were covered with blankets and left overnight.

On 25 June, under Dr. Dobrača's direction, the PHR Consultants (Komar, Stuart, and York) helped the laborers expose and exhume the ten individuals from the mass grave (Photos 6 and 7). The grave was about 8 m long (east to west) and 2 m wide, and very shallow. Laborers did some screen sifting of the soil around the remains. PHR Consultants were also asked to trowel through the soil beneath exhumed remains where they occasionally recovered small bones and put them with the appropriate body bags.

At least nine of the ten heads were oriented to the north. Body 1 was wrapped in a blanket and not closely examined by the Consultants, so orientation was not determined. All observed remains were skeletonized and had no other container except for some blankets. The remains were generally side-by-side, but there was a bit of commingling due to some overlapping. The bodies appeared complete and generally articulated. Civilian-type clothing could be seen in some cases. The remains were placed in new body bags and taken to the Commission's vehicle for transport to the Visoko morgue facility.

Borovac

On 25 June, the Commission sought human remains at a site on the west shoulder of National Route 18 (International Route E762), about 1 km southeast of Borovac at grid coordinate 34T BP 988E 283N. Laborers were directed to dig into rocky terrain on the roadside, but nothing indicative of a burial was found (Photo 10).



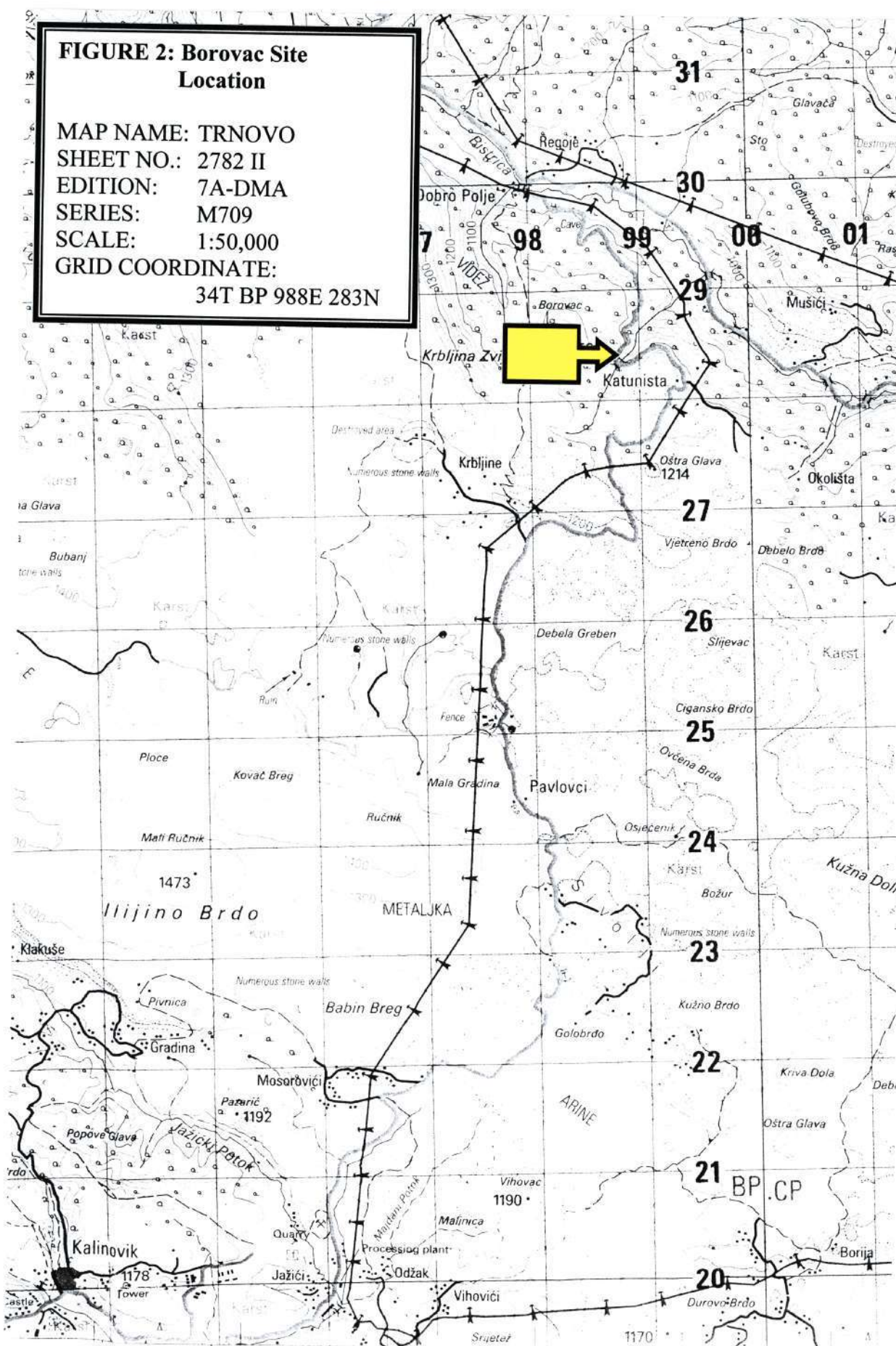




Photo 1: View to the west of cut tree branches piled on the side of the road, 5 m north of the actual burial site at Kalinovik I.



Photo 2: Workers digging around skeletonized remains with shovels at Kalinovik I.



Photo 3: Partially surface-lying, bleached remains of Body 10 at Kalinovik II; shallowly buried elements of same individual exposed *in situ*.



Photo 4: View to the northwest of a Crime Technician searching for evidence with a metal detector at Kalinovik II.



Photo 5: Surface-lying remains collected and assembled in anatomical position at Kalinovik II.



Photo 6: Saudin Hrnjić, Heather York, and laborers exposing remains from the mass grave at Kalinovik II.



Photo 7: Heather York and Debra Komar exposing remains from the mass grave at Kalinovik II.



Photo 8: Bodies 1-10, exposed *in situ*, at Kalinovik II.



Photo 9: View from the road to the west of investigation in progress at Borovac.