

ГІСТОРЫЯ

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*V. V. DANILOVICH, V. L. LAKIZA, V. I. KOSHMAN***MAIN DISCOVERIES OF BELORUSSIAN ARCHAEOLOGY IN 2012***Institute of History of National Academy of Sciences of Belarus**(Has been reseved 11.02.2014)*

Today we are living in a fast-changing reality, hard but very interesting time. The years have passed since essential discoveries were usually made in summer and autumn – the ordinary time for excavations. In the XXI century a field season of Belarussian archaeologists, as well as of our neighbours, practically has no breaks: throughout a year excavations of archaeological sites are conducted to solve fundamental problems of ancient society development, large-scale researches of archaeological sites in new construction areas, inspections of particular regions of the country within the framework of innovative projects are organized.

The year of 2012 was not an exception. Scientists of three archaeology departments (primitive society, Middle Ages, protection and use of archaeological heritage) of the Institute of History of National Academy of Sciences of Belarus together with archaeologists from some Belorussian institutes of higher education carried out research on settlements of Stone and Bronze ages in the territory of the Neman region, the Bug region, the Dnieper region, the Sozh region, the Dvina region (V. Lakiza, A. Tkachev, I. Yazepenko, M. Kryvaltsevich, A. Kolosov, Max. Charnyavsky), on sites of ancient settlement, burial complexes and settlements of the Middle Ages in different regions of Belarus (V. Koshman, A. Iov, M. Plavinsky, A. Voitekhovich, M. Klimov, S. Dernovich, Z. Kharytonovich), in ancient towns and places like Polotsk, Shklov, Vitebsk, Drutsk, Mensk, Pinsk, Grodno, Nesvizh (D. Duk, V. Levko, I. Marzalyuk, A. Medvedev, P. Lysenko, A. Myatselsky, A. Bashkov).

Totally the Institute of History of NAS of Belarus issued about 150 permissions giving the right for excavation to more than 50 Belarussian archaeologists (incl. 35 scientists of the Institute of History and 26 researchers from other institutions). This article depicts only some of the most essential results of research activity, which took place in the territories of Western, Southern and Eastern, Northern and Central Belarus (fig. 1).

Research in the territory of Western Belarus. In 2012 field research was conducted by Vadzim Lakiza in 3 areas of Western Belarus: Grodno, Slonim and Ostrovets regions [2]. The most interesting results were received during studying of sites of Stone and Bronze ages in the territory of Grodno district. It was research of the river Neman banks from Grodno downstream to the villages Plebanskaya and Gozha. It was investigation of construction zone of a new Nemnovskaya Hydro-Power station (fig. 2). Visual examination with large-scale excavation gave good results. Special attention was paid to a wide left-bank terrace of the Neman, where dam a the Hydro-electric power station will take place. Some new objects dating to different periods were found. In addition some sites near villages Gozha, Berezhany, Balya Solnaya, Pyshki, Ostrovok were studied. Five new sites of Stone Age were revealed on the left bank of Neman and in the city of Grodno (from Jewish cemetery to the mouth of the Lososyanka river). One can trace the fact, that towards downstream from Grodno (starting from vil. Balya Solnaya, Pyshki and former Grandzichy) we could find less sites than following the river upwards. The bottom

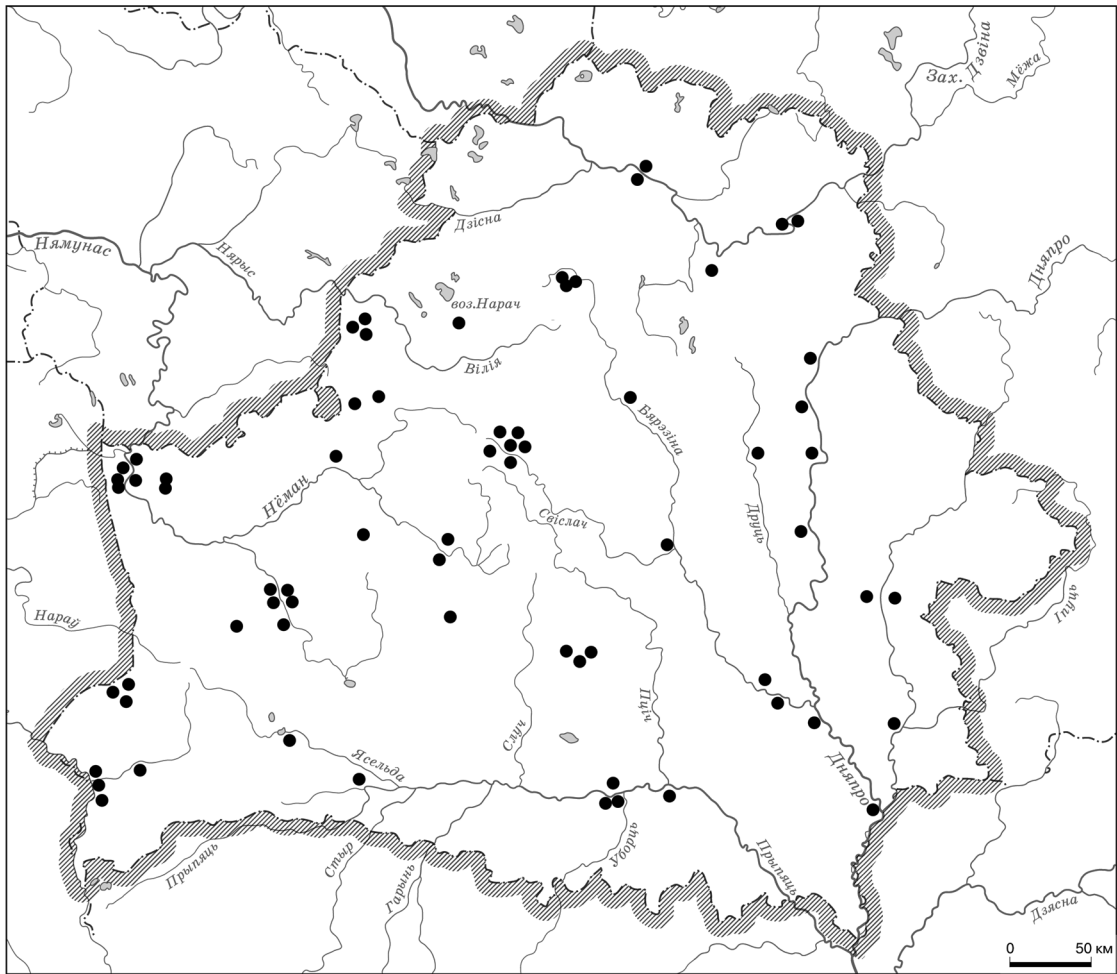


Fig. 1. Map of Belarus presenting locations of main archaeological research of 2012

terraces here are expressed poorly and practically were not used for settling. On top terraces, where the sites situated, mostly Stone Age materials (a final Paleolith, Mesolit) were revealed. There we can observe stratigraphy features with presence of buried cultural layer (Gozha-2) which are characteristic for a number of sites from the construction area of Grodno Hydro-electric power (upwards Grodno).

Near lake Rybnitsa in Grodno district we gathered some surface material and conducted pitting on monuments Ozery-1,-2,-3,-4. We uncovered new artefacts of final Paleolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic ages. In 2012 we finished inventory of archaeology monuments of Slonim district. We managed to find and exactly locate a site of Niz settlement. By the quantity of known monuments of Stone and Bronze ages the Shchara river basin positively outstands among other regions of Ponemanie. Research in 2012 in the territory of Slonim district once again confirmed it.

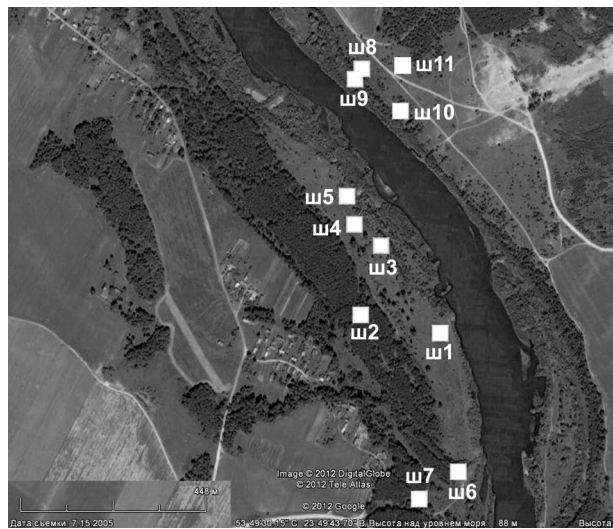


Fig.2. Satellite photograph of the Neman river basin near Plebanskaya village in Grodno district (a perspective place for Nemnovskaya Hydro-Power station construction) with the plan of pitting, 2012

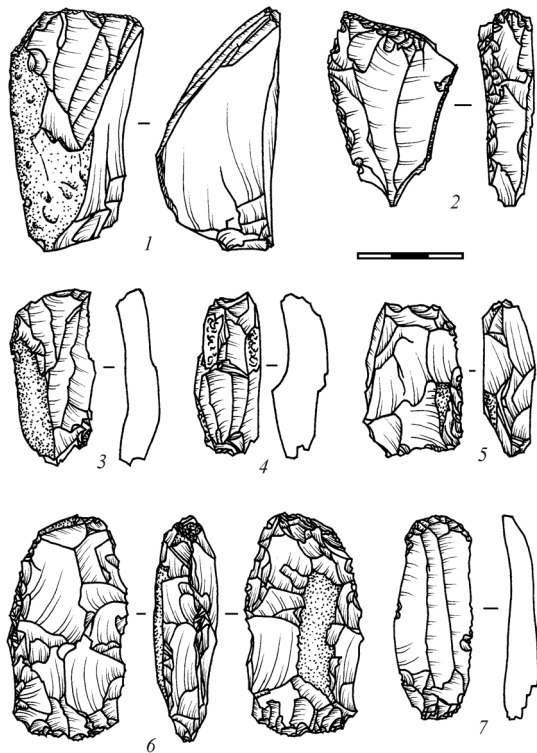


Fig.3. Flint inventory from the multi-cultural settlements near Feradki village in Slonim district (1-5 – Feradki 3; 6-7 – Feradki 2)

Even despite of long-term searches and gathering of surface material, agricultural activity and changes of landscape, it was possible to reveal new objects, such as, for example, nearby village Feradki. Thus the quantity of flint artefacts (fig. 3) and ceramics discovered on new sites is estimated in hundreds.

In 2012 research was carried out in a construction area of a gas pipeline to the Belarussian nuclear power station (research by V.Lakiza). This territory of future Belaruss nuclear power station was not investigated enough. There is an open question with this region because of absence of archaeological sites. Widescale examinations in the areas of new constructions (Belarussian nuclear power station and its infrastructure, a gas pipeline) were not successful. Only two unknown archaeological sites with flint artefacts were found (research by V.Lakiza).

In 2012 Vadzim Beljavets carried out research on a ground burial of the Velbar culture near the village of Petrovichi (Brest region) which is dated last quarter of II – early of IV centuries AD. Since 2000 the author has studied 87 cremations and inhumations. Fibulas of various types, combs, pendants were discovered last year.

Over last years archaeological sites in Golshany (Grodno region) were studied by Pavel Kenko. The hill-fort, open settlement, three groups of barrow mounds were investigated. They represent some chronological stages of Golshany archaeological complex. The earliest period is connected with the culture of the East Lithuanian barrows and presented by buckles, arrow heads and spear heads, a spur, brooches, clay spindle whorls, fragments of hand made pottery. Considerable interest represent Avarian type arrow-heads found in a fire layer of a site of ancient settlement. This type of arrows is also presented in the Eastern Lithuania (the hill-forts of Kernava, Aukshtadvarise, Vilnius etc.), where they are connected with hun tribes of 5th century. The second stage of the history of Golshany is connected with military events of the end of X century – first half of XI century, these are finds of warrior artifacts of northern («Scandinavian») and southern («hazar and Hungarian») origins: heads of spare heads, arrow heads, parts of belt sets, axe, spur, keys and locks and silver dzirhams. Settlement reached its prosperity in the second half of XI century and to the middle of XIII century when considerably increased the areas of settlement. Old Russian lead stamps, weights, fragments of silver bars, fragments of the Byzantian amphoras testify to the developed trade. The open settlement was settled by mixed balto-slavonic population, that is well illustrated by materials.

Research in the territory of Southern and Eastern Belarus. In the course of preparation of the international research project with representatives of the Goettingen university (Germany) and the Institute of History of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus (research by A. Kasjuk), a geomagnetic investigation of 5 archaeological sites dating to the first millenium AD was carried out in 2012. Among them are Snyadin-2,-3, Boriskovichy-1 (Gomel region) and Biruly-1,-2 (in Vitebsk region). Measurements were made by magnetometer. The purpose of research was to get more exact characteristic of the location and safety of the objects. The best results have turned out on settlements Snyadin-2,-3. Two anomalies have been checked up by archaeological sondages on the settlement of Snyadin-2. The stove and iron production constructions were revealed [3].

An early Slavonic settlement of Boriskovichy-1 (Gomel region) was discovered by Alena Kasjuk last year. The burnt house dwelling was found with remnants of floor and stove. The floor was deeped about 0,35 m. A lot of parts of hand-made pottery, spindle whorls and animal bones were revealed. The burnt house dwelling dates back to the end of VII – VIII centuries AD and can be referred to the ending of the Prague culture – an early stage of the Luka-Raikovetskaya culture.

In 2012 large-scale research started in the territory of the construction area of Nezhinsky ore-dressing and processing plant of potash salts and the objects of its infrastructure in Lyuban' district of Minsk region (research by V. Lakiza, Z. Haritonovich, A. Kasjuk, V. Beljavets, M. Kryvaltsevich). It was one of the largest investment projects in Belarus. For example, as a result of a whole examination of new construction areas (a site of plant, a highway, a gas pipeline, railway, a power line) the scientists located a number of new sites which considerably filled up the existing register of sites of the region, new data were obtained for the cultural-chronological characteristic of the history of Central Belarus. For the first time in Belorussian archaeology the hill-fort Obchyn was planned to be completely investigated on the area of about 20 thousand sq.m. Scholars investigated over 200 different objects dating from the Milograd culture of Early Iron Age. In the result an expedition examined peculiarities of the defensive system, investigated hundreds of new artifacts, such as hand-made ceramics and nonferrous metals, took samples for paleobotanic analyses (fig. 4).

In 2013 excavations were finished, the site of ancient settlement Obchyn was completely investigated.

Research in the territory of Northern Belarus. Maxim Charnjauski investigated marsh settlement Osovets-2 (Vitebsk region) of the Usvjatskaya and the Northern Belarus culture (the late 4 – middle of 2 millenium BC). The settlement is unique because of a high spreading of organic artefacts such as bark, bone and wooden items. Cultural layer is about 1,5 m. Artifacts are presented by arrow heads, pins, harpoons, fish knives, pendants, beads. Among findings there were a lot of wood and water nuts, acorns, bones of animals, birds and fishes.

Sites near the village of Biruly have been studied by scholars of the Institute of History of National Academy of Sciences of Belarus since 2005. This complex is located near picturesque lake Medzozol, which is a part of water system of Bezina Dneprovskaya.

In 2012 Zoya Haritonovich continued excavation of hill-fort Biruli (Vitebsk region). There were revealed the artefacts of first settlers who presented the Dnepro-Dvina culture (about the first half of the 1st millenium BC). Among materials are clay sinckers, hand-made pottery, fragments of a bracelet and nonferrous temple rings, iron-made items (knives, awls, fishing hooks) [4].

On the open settlement Biruli research was conducted under the guidance of Sergey Dernovich. The unique material represents different historical ages – from Stone to the Middle Ages. The most interesting artifacts date back to IX – the early of XI centuries, so called “Viking age”. During that period the complex was a large trading-craft settlement. Various goods from the countries of the East, Byzantium, Scandinavia were brought there, the part of items were of local production. Finds of silver Arabian coins and weights testify to a brisk trade. Artifacts which are connected with Scandinavian warriors were found.

The remnants of a burnt dwelling house of VIII – XIX centuries were revealed. As a result of excavation products from nonferrous metal were found: buttons, ornaments (trapezoid and rhombic pendants, fragments of bracelets), tweezers, iron-ware: knives, fire steels, keys, items from glass: beads of different form and colours.

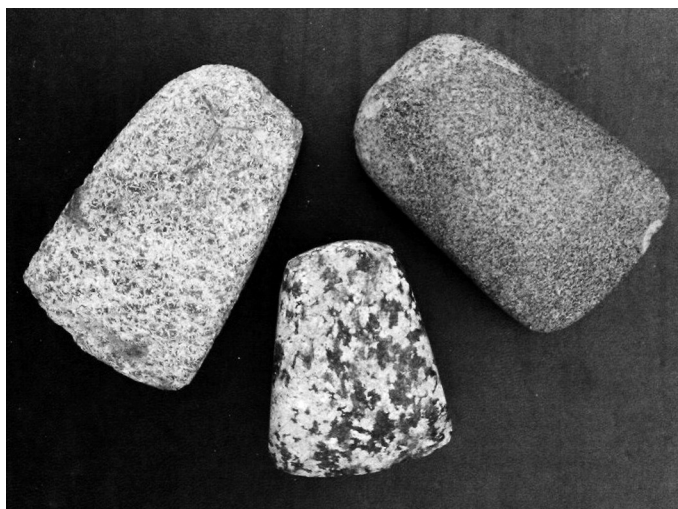


Fig.4. Stone shaft-hole axes from Obchyn site in Lyuban' district

Burial mounds near village Biruly were studied by Andrey Vojtehovich. Among them was revealed the inhumation of a child with grave items (knife, brooch, ring, bracelet and a fragment of silver dzirham) dating back to the early of XI century. Temple rings, a bracelet and glass beads were discovered in woman's cremation of X century.

The barrows with cremation and inhumation of Nebyshino dating back to IX – early XI centuries were revealed. The belt set of VIII – IX centuries as a part of grave items of cremation could be considered an outstanding for this territory. Variety of glass beads spectrum were presented in inhumations.

The expedition of the National History Museum of Belarus by Nikolay Plavinskiy investigated the barrow mounds of Navry (Minsk region). In 2012 an expedition explored the area about 400 sq.m. and investigated 4 barrows. In all studied barrows there were inhumations dating back to XI century. They are connected with Krivichi.

Research in the territory of Central Belarus. Quite interesting were investigations of the archaeological complex of Menka by Andrey Vojtehovich. This ancient site included hill-fort and some settlements. The total area of complex is about 30 hectares. The artifacts of XI–XII centuries which were uncovered in 2012 reaffirm the idea that this site was military, economic and trade centre in the end of X – the beginning of XI centuries. The settlement was destroyed by a military attack in the second half of XI century and then its functions passed to fortresses in Minsk.

In 2012 the defensive system of the hill-fort of Svislach (Mogilev region) was studied by Vadzim Koshman. This site represents considerable interest for researchers because of traces of destruction by

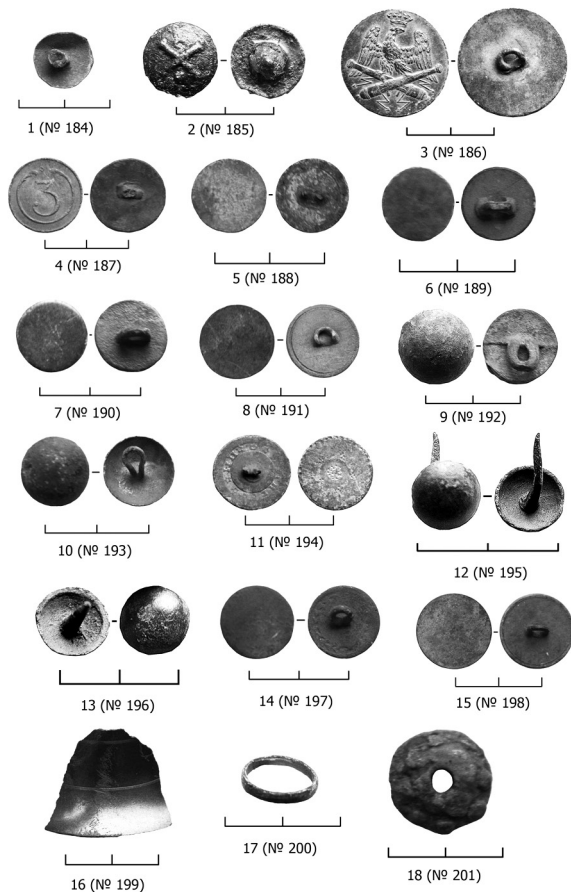


Fig. 5. Archaeological artefacts from the place of fight on the river Berezina and crossing Napoleon's Great Army in November, 1812 (1–11, 14–15, 18 – buttons of various divisions of Napoleon's Great Army, 12–13 – miniature nails, a piece of the miniature bell, 17 – ring)

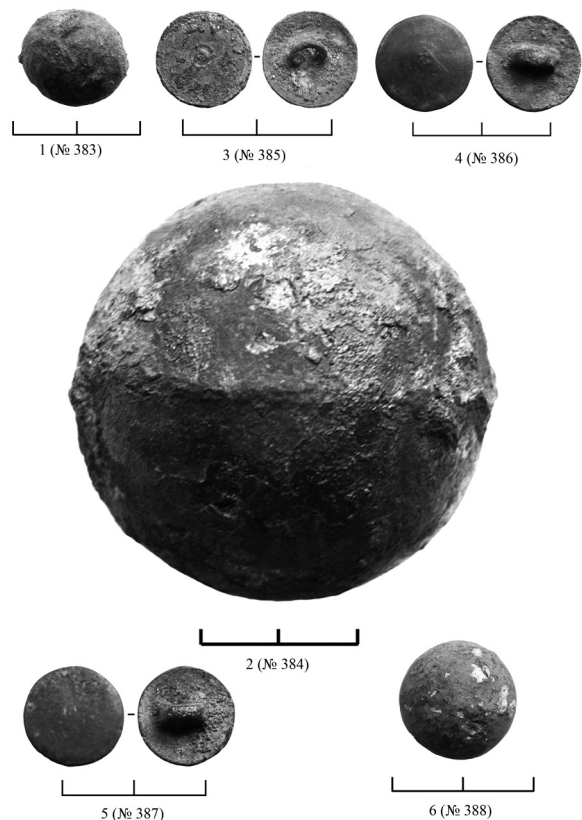


Fig. 6. Archaeological artefacts from the place of fight on the river Berezina and crossing Napoleon's Great Army in November, 1812 (1–6 – bullets, 3–5 – buttons of various divisions of Napoleon's Great Army, 2 – cannonball)

Mongol troops in mid. XIII century. During the excavation in 2012 the structure of a rampart and stages of its construction were studied.

Within the memorable events devoted to the 200 anniversary of fight on the river Berezina and crossing of Napoleon's Great Army in November, 1812 the international archaeological expedition with participation of archeologists of Belarus and France has been organised [5]. The French part was presented by experts of the National institute of preventive archaeological research (Inrap). Some methods as underwater research of the river Berezina in a crossing place, hand work excavations, using mechanism in diagnostic trenches and surface gathering of artifacts with metal-detectors were used. More than 2000 sq.m. were investigated (fig. 5).

As a result of these works archaeological materials dating from Stone Age to middle XX century were received. The findings testify the important role of this microregion at all times of history.

Flint articles which are related to Neolithic and Bronze period, the period of the early Iron Age were found. The collection of artefacts of the period of Ancient Rus' dating back to X – XII centuries found in the course of research speak for the traces of the open settlement and destroyed burial mounds. The collection of artefacts of XVI – XVII centuries presented by numismatical and ceramic material is representative too. These finds exactly localise an initial place of the village of Studenka. A lot of fragments of cannonballs, bullets, elements of ammunition and arms, buttons of various divisions of Napoleon's Great Army show the tragical history on the banks of Berezina (fig. 6).

The results of excavations in 2012 on the river of Berezina are optimistic enough and in perspective it is possible to find out the remains of bridges and mass graves.

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ВАЖНЕЙШИЕ ОТКРЫТИЯ БЕЛОРУССКОЙ АРХЕОЛОГИИ В 2012 ГОДУ

Резюме

Представлены основные итоги археологических исследований на территории Беларуси в 2012 г. Масштабные комплексные полевые работы были проведены на десятках памятников различных исторических эпох – от каменного века до XIX столетия. Описаны предварительные результаты анализа материалов, полученных при раскопках уникального торфяникового поселения усвятской и северобелорусской культур Осовец-2, масштабных исследований Неманского региона в связи со строительством ГЭС и зоны будущей белорусской АЭС, погребальных памятников вельбарской культуры (древних готов) в Петровичах на Брестчине, славянских поселений в Припятском Полесье, бассейне Верхней Березины, на территории первоначального Минска – Менке, курганных и грунтовых захоронений X – XIV вв. в Центральной и Западной Беларуси. В связи с мероприятиями, посвященными 200-летию военных событий на р. Березина, была организована и проведена белорусско-французская археологическая экспедиция, которая исследовала место переправы армии Наполеона через р. Березину.