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## Bulgarian Encyclopedia Scientific Information Centre: Heritage and development

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ABSTRACT: The Bulgarian Encyclopedia Scientific Information Centre is a constituent part of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, responsible for the compilation and publication of encyclopedias and encyclopedic reference books. Its work follows the tradition of encyclopedic knowledge in Bulgarian culture dating back to medieval collections from the court of Tsar Simeon I in the 9th to 10th centuries. Encyclopedic content is also contained in the first Bulgarian schoolbook, published in 1824, and in the growing interest in reference publications before and after the liberation of Bulgaria from the Ottoman Empire in 1878. The first Bulgarian general encyclopedia, the Encyclopedic Dictionary, was published in 1899–1907, followed by the popular Bulgarian Encyclopedia A-Ya in 1936. A specialised unit for the preparation of encyclopedias and encyclopedic reference literature was established at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in 1955 under the name Bulgarian Encyclopedia, and was renamed the Bulgarian Encyclopaedia Scientific Information Centre in 2003. The Centre's mission is to disseminate scientific knowledge widely and in an accessible form. The Centre's main activities include the compilation and preparation of general one-volume and multi-volume encyclopedias, the development of methodological guidelines and technologies for new publications, the preparation of thematic vocabularies of the articles and illustrations of the editions, and editorial and compiling work. The publications of the Bulgarian Encyclopedia Scientific Information Centre are of a high academic level, and the editorial and compilation work is carried out by experienced scientific encyclopedic editors, which guarantees the high professional standards of the publications. Multiple editions of the Bulgarian Encyclopedia have been published, covering a wide range of topics such as history, science, culture, and more. The Centre has also published thematic encyclopedias and electronic versions of its work, and collaborates with various organisations and publishers to continue its responsible activity of national importance.

**Keywords:** Bulgarian Encyclopedia; Bulgarian Academy of Sciences; encyclopedia; editorial and compiling work; history of encyclopedic activity in Bulgaria

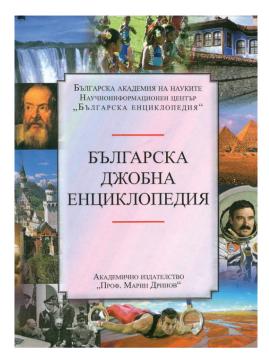
### 1. Brief introduction

The Bulgarian Encyclopedia Scientific Information Centre is an independent academic unit of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The subject of its activity is the dissemination and popularisation of scientific knowledge through the creation and publication of general and specialised encyclopedias and reference publications; producing, editing, and reviewing materials on Bulgaria for foreign encyclopedias; providing methodological and editorial assistance in the preparation of encyclopedias by other publishers and institutes; producing and providing information for various institutions in the country and abroad.

The main activities of the Centre are the compilation and preparation of general one-volume and multi-volume encyclopedias, specialised encyclopedias, encyclopedic digests, etc.; development of methodological guidelines and technologies for new publications; preparation of thematic vocabularies of the articles and illustrations of the editions; editorial and compiling work (commission of authors to write articles, editing authors' articles, compiling articles, compiling and editing illustrative material); creation of a single manuscript; negotiating the conditions for printing the publications with publishers; reviewing layouts and heliocopies for printing; preparing and providing up-to-date information on Bulgaria for foreign encyclopedias; providing methodological assistance in the preparation of encyclopedic reference books by other institutes of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The publications of the Bulgarian Encyclopedia Centre are of a high academic level: their authors, consultants, and collaborators are prominent Bulgarian scientists from all fields of science. The editorial and compilation work is carried out by experienced scientific encyclopedic editors, which guarantees the high professional standards of the publications.

## 2. The history of encyclopedic activity in Bulgaria

The Bulgarian Encyclopedia Centre honours a long tradition dating back to the beginnings of Bulgarian literary tradition. The first examples of encyclopedic knowledge are contained in medieval collections from 1073 and 1076, in which scribes from the court of Tsar Simeon I compiled writings on theology, ethics, logic, grammar, poetics, philosophy, history, botany, and astronomy, offering readers the principles of Christian morality as a norm of behaviour. These two collections are a testimony to the thriving Bulgarian culture in the 9th to 10th centuries. Encyclopedic content is also contained in the first Bulgarian schoolbook, the so-called »Fish textbook« compiled by Dr Petar Beron and published in 1824 (Beron 1862). Even before the liberation of Bulgaria from the Ottoman Empire in 1878, and especially in the following years, there was a growing interest in reference publications. Calen-

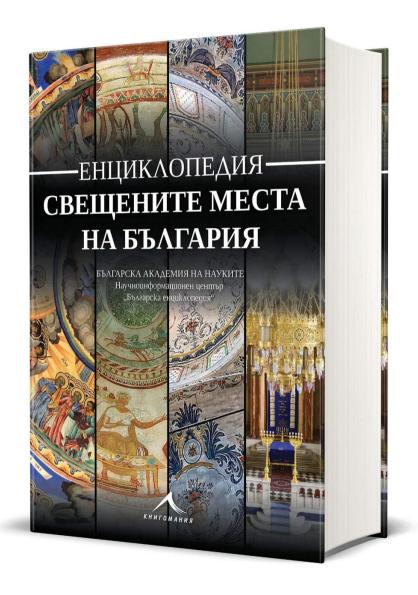


Bulgarian Pocket Encyclopedia

dars were printed, containing encyclopedic references, almanacs, yearbooks, and thematic reference books for various areas of social and cultural life.

The first Bulgarian general encyclopedia, the Encyclopedic Dictionary, was published in 1899-1907 in three parts and was the product of Luka Kasarov's 30 years of meticulous work. He set himself the noble and difficult task of giving the Bulgarian reader a comprehensive encyclopedic reference book »...which is presented to the schools and to the intelligent public in the hope of becoming the vade mecum of every private library, of every home« (Kasarov 1899, 4). The Encyclopedic Dictionary contains about 23,000 articles, in which historical, geographical, scientific, literary, mythological, biblical, biographical, and other information is featured; foreign words used in the Bulgarian literary language are translated; Bulgarian literary words which are difficult to understand are explained. The popular Bulgarian Encyclopedia A-Ya, published in 1936, was compiled by Nikola and Ivan Danchov in collaboration with many specialists, using a huge number of reference books by Bulgarian and foreign authors (Danchov 1936). The encyclopedia contains about 35,000 articles. Events, phenomena, and concepts from various fields of knowledge are explained, literary works are presented, Latin and other expressions are explained. The edition includes biographical articles on many Bulgarians and foreigners and articles on settlements and various other objects. It is richly illustrated with

graphic drawings: portraits, paintings, views, schemes. At the beginning of the  $20^{\rm th}$  century, encyclopedic material was also contained in some translated dictionaries. Specialised encyclopedic reference books appeared on the market: on economics, philology, literature, medicine, etc.



Encyclopedia Sacred Places of Bulgaria

## 3. The modern national encyclopedia unit and its activity

A specialised unit for the preparation of encyclopedias and encyclopedic reference literature was established at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in 1955, called the Bulgarian Encyclopedia. In 2003 it was renamed as Bulgarian Encyclopaedia Scientific Information Centre at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Through this activity, the Centre fulfils the educational mission of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, to disseminate scientific knowledge widely and in an accessible form. Until 1989, the Bulgarian Encyclopedia received full financial support from the government for its publications. However, after the political changes in 1989, the Centre had to find a new way to continue its important work for the nation, while also accommodating the new economic conditions that were imposed. At the end of 2002, the Scientific Information Centre published the first Bulgarian electronic encyclopedia, a modern digital version of the printed edition of the *Bulgarian Encyclopedia*, *A-Ya*.

The second edition of the electronic encyclopedia has been expanded and updated to include over 32,000 articles encompassing all fields of human knowledge. These articles are organised alphabetically and also grouped into 700 categories and subcategories within various fields of science. The edition offers efficient search capabilities that include word, phrase, word forms, categories, and multimedia resources included in the edition. Users can annotate and bookmark articles as well as search the Internet for information on a topic and view results directly in the encyclopedia window. The encyclopedia is richly illustrated with over 11,000 images, and composers and performers of classical, popular, and folk music, along with national anthems, are represented with sound recordings. Furthermore, more than 300 video fragments from Bulgarian and foreign feature and popular films are included. The Atlas application comprises three separate sections.

The first section features a three-dimensional representation of the globe, providing users with a visual understanding of the geographical position of countries, cities, and rivers on the globe. The second section is a relief map of Bulgaria, bearing information on the location of mountain peaks, water bodies, roads, and settlements in the country.

The final section features new physico-geographical maps of all countries. (BE 2004) In 2005, the online portal Znam.bg was launched, which included modern and constantly updated encyclopedic and catalogue resources, dictionaries and teaching aids, geographical and historical maps, and multimedia applications. Unfortunately, the site's activity was cancelled in 2015 due to lack of funding.





## 150 ГОДИНИ БЪЛГАРСКА АКАДЕМИЯ НА НАУКИТЕ. ХРАМ НА ПОЗНАНИЕТО. 2020

Изданието "150 години Българска академия на наужите. Храм на познанието "е първото по рода нециклопоедничо издание за БАН, което събира в една инита широк кръг от теми, свързани както с вазностранната научна дейност, така и с вековната история на Академията. В научнопопулярна и достъпна форма то представя съвременния облик на БАН и нейния научен потенциал. 150-годишната история на организационната и научната дейност и значителните постижения на академичните учени във всички области на значител

Юбилейното издание е луксозно, цветно, на гланцова хартия, богато илисстрирано. Разработено е под ръководството на Редакционна колегия от водещи учени от Анадемията, с помощта на научни консултанти от всички научни направления и с активната подкрепел на Председателя на БАН. Издател — Академично издателство "Проф. Марин Дринов".

#### ЕНЦИКЛОПЕДИЯ "БЪЛГАРИЯ". 2021

Едногомната енциклопедия "България" предлага на читателя богата, актуалиа и проверена информация за Република България — за нейната природа, история, стопанство, наука и култура. Обобщена в тематично подредени и богато илистрирани обори, тя рисува пред читателя красотата и многообразието на българската природа, на растителния и эниотическая свят, проследява многовеовната история на българите, поталя го в тяхната богата материална и условна култура, извика огородст от развитието и услежите на българия, а на българия в сестовната култура. Извигата на при и изкуство и акцентира върху учикалния принос на България в сестовната културна съхроещимца.

Единствена по рода си, енциклопедията събира в един том богата съкровицинца от достоверни и научно проверени анания и факта въ България и българския проверени анания и факта въ Българския българския народ, поднесени по увлекателен и достъпен начин. Информацията е представена в 42 обзора, обединени в шест теми и богато илистрирани с над 2000 сними. Събраният материал е дело на дългогодишния труд и дълбожите научни познания и изследвания на изявени български учени и специалисти от БАЛ Софийския университет и други висши училища и от водещи културни институции – автори и консултанти на книята. Издага — мазателство "Книгомания"

#### ЕНЦИКЛОПЕДИЯ "СОФИЯ". 2017

Енциклопедия "София" е първата специализирана енциклопедия, посветена на столицата на България. Тя събира в един том максимално пълна и разностранна информация за града, известен със своята хилядолетна история и богата култура. Двуезичното издание - на български и английски език. посветено на столицата на България, представя природната среда, важни събития от миналото на града, неговото развитие и днешното състояние на управлението, обществения и духовния живот на София и региона. Опознавателните разходки, включени на страниците на енциклопелията, отвеждат читателя на знакови централни софийски улици и площади, които дават облика на града, и разкриват пред него очарованието на стара и нова София. Издател – Книгоиздателска къща "Труд".

Some of the newest printed editions





#### СПЕЦИАЛИЗИРАНИ ЕНЦИКЛОПЕДИИ - II

През последните десетилетия все повече нараства интересът към националните идентичести и сосбеностите на духовнята и запериалнята дългара. Откансвейни на обществените нагласи и потребности националните ни традиции да се попучарацият пред най-ишрок кръс от читалени. Научновиформационен интерт Българска енциклопедит предорично подества и тублицва темалични издания, посветени на българската перационена кулитура.

## **ЕНЦИКЛОПЕДИЯ "КАЛЕНДАРНИ ПРАЗНИЦИ И ОБИЧАИ НА БЪЛГАРИТЕ".** 1996, 1998, 2000, 2003, 2015

#### илюстрована Енциклопедия "Български традиционен Календар". 2002 (на бълг. език), 2003 (на англ. език). Глабен редактор проф. М. Василева

редаетор гроф. М. Василейз Това е парво по рода си издание в България и обединява тенот и и искоттрации б едно цяло. За имострирането на 100-те статти и изданието са изполовани 149 каленадарии правичени ротпара, 27 июни на събетции 14 июни с библебиои сонжети. Те дабат възмочност на читаттелна до сероное до нетоброщостита на 16-хвароната территори. В ребания и обредни добърожно на изданието е добърожно до на на изданието е добърожно до на на изданието е да за селоно до на за селоно в за селон



Bulgarian Calendar Holidays and Observances (various editions)

## Publications by the Bulgarian Encyclopedia

1963–1969	Short Bulgarian Encyclopedia (5 vols)
1974	General Encyclopedia »A-Ya«
1978–1996	National Encyclopedia »Bulgaria« (7 vols)
1984–1987	Agricultural Encyclopedia (3 vols)
1985	Information Bulgaria. A Short Encyclopaedia of the People's Republic of Bulgaria (in English)
1990-2000	Physics-mathematical and Technical Encyclopedia (3 vols)
1994	Encyclopedia »Nobel Laureates«
1996 (1998, 2000, 2003)	Encyclopedia »Bulgarian Calendar Holidays and Observances«
1999 (2002, 2005, 2007, 2009)	Bulgarian Encyclopedia »A-Ya«
2002 (2003)	Bulgarian Traditional Calendar
2002 (2004)	Bulgarian Encyclopedia »A-Ya«, electronic edition
2005	Znam.bg – online encyclopedic portal
2006	Specialised Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants in Bulgaria
2006	Trilingual encyclopedia »Nature« (in Bulgarian, English, Russian)
2008	Characters of World Literature
2009	Bulgarian Pocket Encyclopedia
2009	Aprilovski vault
2010	World Heritage of Bulgaria
2011	Large Encyclopedia Bulgaria (12 vols)
2017	Bilingual Encyclopedia »Sofia«
2019	»Bulgarian Calendar Holidays and Observances« (in English)
2020	$\!\!$ »150 Years Bulgarian Academy of Sciences« (in English and Bulgarian)
2021	Encyclopedia »Bulgaria«
2022	Encyclopedia »Sacred Places of Bulgaria«

## 4. Human resources: The greatest treasure

Currently, the Bulgarian Encyclopedia Scientific Information Centre has 23 staff members: director, deputy director, editor-in-chief, editors, and accountants. The editors are divided in two departments: Humanitarian and Social Sciences and Natural, Mathematical and Technical Sciences. They work in parallel as language editors, translators proficient in a number of foreign languages, and designers. Articles are written by our editors according to their field of expertise, or by external authors, prominent scientists in the relevant field of knowledge. Each editor cooperates with

external associates (academic writers, university teachers, members of the Academy of Sciences, etc.). The texts are edited and reviewed by our senior editors. Each draft is reviewed by external scientific associates in collaboration with the senior editors. The Centre has established strong ties with a large base of scientists, student interns, and prominent scholars as contributors to our editions.

## 5. Funding, challenges and the future

The Bulgarian Encyclopedia is partly supported by the state budget as a unit of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences as well as by its own revenues from projects and the publication of encyclopedias in partnership with leading publishers. Funding remains one of the major challenges for development and upcoming projects.

Plans for the future development of the Bulgarian Encyclopedia include joint work with the Institute of Information and Communication Technologies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences to digitise all previous editions and image archives in order to make them accessible to a wider audience. The team will focus on expanding its readership base by promoting its work to a wider audience and making it more accessible through digitisation. Another key initiative is to establish stronger and more comprehensive partnerships with external partners to increase the scope and impact of its work. The Centre will continue to cooperate with foreign encyclopedic editorials to share knowledge and expertise. The first and foremost priority is to create a new online national general encyclopedia to provide online access to authentic information in the Bulgarian language to readers such as schoolchildren, students, employees in various state institutions, scientists, and the general curious public. Aware of the need to provide online access to authentic information in the Bulgarian language, the Bulgarian Encyclopedia Scientific Research Centre has taken the first steps to create a new, improved version of an online Bulgarian encyclopedia.

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## ZNANSTVENOINFORMATIČKI CENTAR »BUGARSKA ENCIKLOPEDIJA«: NASLJEĐE I RAZVOJ

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SAŽETAK: Znanstvenoinformatički centar »Bugarska enciklopedija« sastavni je dio Bugarske akademije znanosti i odgovoran je za kompiliranje i izdavanje enciklopedija i enciklopedijskih referentnih djela. Njegov rad slijedi tradiciju enciklopedijskoga znanja u bugarskoj kulturi, početci kojega sežu do srednjovjekovnih zbirki s dvora cara Simeona I. u IX. i X. stoljeću. Enciklopedijski sadržaj nalazimo i u prvom bugarskom školskom udžbeniku, izdanom 1824., kao i u rastućem zanimanju za priručnike i referentna izdanja prije i nakon oslobođenja Bugarske od osmanske vlasti 1878. Prva bugarska opća enciklopedija, Enciklopedijski rječnik, izdana je 1899-1907., a iduća je bila popularna Bugarska enciklopedija A-Ya, izdana 1936. Specijalizirana jedinica za enciklopedije i enciklopedijska referentna djela osnovana je pri Bugarskoj akademiji znanosti 1955. pod imenom »Bugarska enciklopedija«, a 2003. preimenovana je u Znanstvenoinformatički centar »Bugarska enciklopedija«. Cilj Centra je širenje znanstvenih spoznaja u široj javnosti i u pristupačnom obliku. Glavne aktivnosti Centra obuhvaćaju kompilaciju i pripremu općih jedno- i višesveščanih enciklopedija, razvoj metodoloških smjernica i tehnologija za nove publikacije, pripremanje tematskih vokabulara članaka i ilustracija za izdanja te uredničke i kompilacijske poslove. Izdanja Znanstvenoinformatičkoga centra »Bugarska enciklopedija« visoke su akademske razine, a uredničke i kompilacijske poslove obavljaju iskusni urednici znanstvenih enciklopedijskih djela, što izdanjima jamči visoke profesionalne standarde. Izdano je više izdanja Bugarske enciklopedije, koja pokriva širok spektar tema, uključujući povijest, znanost, kulturu itd. Centar je usto izdao tematske enciklopedije i elektroničke inačice svojih radova, te surađuje s raznim organizacijama i izdavačima kako bi nastavio svoj odgovorni zadatak, koji je od nacionalne važnosti.

**Ključne riječi:** Bugarska enciklopedija; Bugarska akademija znanosti; enciklopedija; uređivanje i kompiliranje; povijest enciklopedistike u Bugarskoj



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