

УДК 001

<https://doi.org/10.24852/2587-6112.2025.2.367.369>

ON THE CONCEPT OF ENCYCLOPEDIAS “VOLGA BULGARIA” AND “GOLDEN HORDE”

© 2025 B.L. Khamidullin

The article briefly discusses the primary objectives, intended goals, and main content of the planned academic encyclopedias «Volga Bulgaria» and «Golden Horde». These initiatives aim to address the spiritual demands of the progressive part of our society, who are interested in the history and culture of our Homeland and the peoples living here. Moreover, the encyclopedias are designed to provide comprehensive reference material regarding the history, culture, and geography of Volga Bulgaria and the Golden Horde.

Keywords: academic encyclopedia, Volga Bulgaria, the Golden Horde, history and culture of the peoples of Russia.

О КОНЦЕПЦИИ ЭНЦИКЛОПЕДИЙ «ВОЛЖСКАЯ БУЛГАРИЯ» И «ЗОЛОТАЯ ОРДА»

Б.Л. Хамидуллин

В статье вкратце рассматривается концепция планируемых академических энциклопедий «Волжская Булгария» и «Золотая Орда», основные цели и задачи указанных предполагаемых проектов. Эти проекты обусловлены необходимостью дать ответ на духовные запросы прогрессивной части нашего общества, интересующейся историей и культурой нашей Отчизны, проживающих здесь народов. Указанные энциклопедии призваны дать максимально полный справочный материал по истории, культуре, географии Волжской Булгарии и Золотой Орды.

Ключевые слова: академические энциклопедии, Волжская Булгария, Золотая Орда, история и культура народов России.

An encyclopedia is a type of scientific or popular scientific systematic reference publication. The former caters to a narrow audience of professional specialists, while the latter appeals to a broader readership. Historically, the first encyclopedias of antiquity and the Middle Ages used the example of terminological dictionaries as a basis for information structuring. Such a practice continues to this day as most modern encyclopedias are organized in alphabetical order, with the exception of children's encyclopedias, which are usually formed according to thematic blocks.

Academic encyclopedias are characterized by a comprehensive overview of the relevant material, high information density, and high levels of reliability. They often contain maps and illustrations, as well as appendices in the form of statistical data, bibliographies, tables, etc. Modern technologies have significantly impacted the way in which encyclopedic knowledge can be presented to the audience. In particular, the possibility of using a multimedia format has appeared, which allows enriching articles not only with high-quality photographs and maps but also with audio and video materials. In print encyclopedias, this

can be achieved through the use of QR codes (e.g., see the brochure dedicated to 50 prominent Tatars «Outstanding personalities» published by the Institute of Tatar Encyclopedia and Regional Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan (Vydayushchiesya, 2022)).

From the perspective of the material coverage, encyclopedias are divided into universal (i.e., those that cover all fields of knowledge and practical activity; for example, the Encyclopedia «Britannica», «Wikipedia», «The Great Encyclopedia of Cyril and Methodius», the «Great Russian Encyclopedia») and thematic (e.g., the «Chemical Encyclopedia», «Russian Historical Encyclopedia», «Encyclopedia of the Quran», «Jewish Encyclopedia», «Tatar Encyclopedia», and online encyclopedia «Tatarica»). Certain types of encyclopedias include encyclopedias designed for a specific age group, such as, for example, a variety of children's general or subject-specific encyclopedias, as well as regional and biographical encyclopedias such as, for example, a short illustrated encyclopedia «Tatarstan» (Tatarstan, 2015), encyclopedias «Nature and natural resources of the Republic

of Tatarstan» (Priroda, 2017) and «Settlements of the Republic of Tatarstan» (Naselyonnye, 2018–2024), encyclopedias «Tatars of Kazakhstan» (Tatary Kazakhstana, 2017) and «Tatars of Uzbekistan» (Khamidullin, Ainutdinova, 2024), published by the Institute of Tatar Encyclopedia and Regional Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan...

The current article seeks to outline only the most basic goals and objectives of the proposed «Volga Bulgaria» and «Golden Horde» academic encyclopedias and discuss possible ways to achieve them.

These projects aim to respond to the spiritual demands of the progressive part of our society, which is keenly interested in the past and future of our Homeland.

It should be noted that there are practically no academic encyclopedias in Russian devoted to individual states of antiquity and the Middle Ages, which are currently absent from the modern political map of the world. To my knowledge, similar academic encyclopedias in other languages of the world are scarce as well, with the notable exception of numerous series of children's illustrated encyclopedias in different languages, which cover the history of Ancient Egypt, Ancient China, the Roman and Mongolian Empires, the Achaemenid empire, the Arab caliphates, and the Maya and Inca empires.

The academic encyclopedias «Volga Bulgaria» and «Golden Horde» are envisioned to be single-volume popular scientific reference publications in print and multimedia format. It is designed to provide a systematic, comprehensive, and reliable source of information about the medieval period of the history of Central Eurasia, with the objective of enriching the intellectual resources of society by enhancing the level and systematization of scientific knowledge catered to high school students and students of various higher educational institutions about the respective historical period and broadening horizons and improving the professionalism of teachers, graduate students, researchers, journalists, and creative intelligentsia, as well as other wide range of readers.

These single-volume encyclopedias aim to provide the most extensive reference material on the history, culture, and geography of Volga Bulgaria and the Golden Horde. This includes information about events of political, economic, ethnic, and confessional significance, famous

statesmen and other prominent historical figures, the way of life of the local population and the nature of its habitat, archaeological, written, and folklore sources, and scholars, who studied and are currently studying the history and culture of these states, to name but a few.

Additionally, it is deemed necessary that the encyclopedias «Volga Bulgaria» and «Golden Horde» present a concise but comprehensive historical context of the regions before the formation of Volga Bulgaria and the Golden Horde as major political entities in order to provide a reader with a deeper understanding of the political and cultural background of these states. In this regard, the encyclopedias should reflect the prehistory of the two states' main population, the history and culture of neighboring countries and peoples, the historical heritage of the Bulgarian and Golden Horde states, such as, for instance, brief texts on the Great Bulgaria of Khan Kubrat and the settlement of Bulgarian tribes in Eastern Europe, the Khazar Khaganate, the Finno-Ugric peoples, Desht-i Kipchak and the Mongol Empire (and, in particular, about the conquest of Volga Bulgaria in the XIII century), the Russian principalities, and post-Horde states, their geography, history and culture.

Most articles of encyclopedias will contain illustrations and a basic bibliography, which should consider the most significant archaeological and archival materials, academic monographs, dissertation abstracts, prominent popular scientific sources, and publications about local history, etc. Additional photo, video and cartographic materials can be accessed through QR codes that redirect the reader to the website of online-encyclopedia «Tatarica» (Tatarica) or to the information geographical system of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan «Cultural Heritage of Tatarstan and the Tatar people» (Kul'turnoe nasledie), to give a few examples.

In June 2024, at the meeting of the Department of Humanities of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan, the Institute of Tatar Encyclopedia and Regional Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan initiated the discussion regarding the publication of encyclopedias «Volga Bulgaria» and «Golden Horde». The relevance of these projects, the amount of necessary funding, the expected stages, deadlines, and the expected scientific result were considered. Concluding the discussion, members

of the Humanitarian branch of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan – and these are full members and corresponding members of the Academy of Sciences of Tatarstan – regarded these projects as relevant and generally supported the initiative of our institute.

With the possible financial support of these projects from the state and patrons and active cooperation from the specialists in the history and culture of Volga Bulgaria and the Golden Horde from various regions of the Russian Federation and some neighboring countries, the envisioned encyclopedias can be successfully completed by 2030–2035.

We envision a collaborative process involving two scientific and editorial boards for meth-

odological guidance and organizational support, with scholars curating over a dozen specialized areas like archaeology, geography, demography, history, linguistics, cultural studies, museology, numismatics, political science, law, religious studies and theology, philology, philosophy, ethnology, etc. as well as writing articles and scientific reviews for the encyclopedias itself.

Detailed scientific concepts of the academic encyclopedias «Volga Bulgaria» and «Golden Horde» should be developed and approved by a team of the above-mentioned specialists, namely historians, ethnologists, art historians, linguists, etc., who will become part of the scientific and editorial boards of these projects in the future.

REFERENCES

Burganov, G. G. (ed.). 2017. *Priroda i prirodnye resursy Respubliki Tatarstan: illyustrirovannaya entsiklopediya* (Nature and natural resources of the Republic of Tatarstan: an illustrated encyclopedia). Kazan: Institute of Tatar Encyclopedia and Regional Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan (in Russian).

2022. *Vydayushchiesya lichnosti: mul'timedijnyj buklet-kommunikator* (Outstanding personalities: multimedia communication booklet). Kazan: Institute of Tatar Encyclopedia and Regional Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan. (in Russian)

Kul'turnoe nasledie Tatarstana i tatarskogo naroda: Informatsionnaya geograficheskaya sistema (Cultural heritage of Tatarstan and the Tatar people: Geographic Information System). Available at: <https://www.culturetat.ru/> (in Russian)

Salikhov, M. Kh. (ed. in chief.). 2015. Tatarstan. *Kratkaya illyustrirovannaya entsiklopediya* (Tatarstan. A short illustrated encyclopedia). Kazan: Institute of Tatar Encyclopedia and Regional Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan (in Russian).

Shaidullin, R. V. (ed.). 2017. *Tatary Kazakhstana: kratkaya illyustrirovannaya entsiklopediya* (Tatars of Kazakhstan: a short illustrated encyclopedia). Kazan: Institute of Tatar Encyclopedia and Regional Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan (in Russian).

Khamidullin, Kh., Ainutdinova, L. M. (ed.). 2018–2024. *Naseleennyye punkty Respubliki Tatarstan: illyustrirovannaya entsiklopediya 9 Settlements of the Republic of Tatarstan: an illustrated encyclopedia*. Kazan: Institute of Tatar Encyclopedia and Regional Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan (in Russian).

Khamidullin, Kh., Ainutdinova, L. M. (ed.). 2024. *Tatary Uzbekistana: entsiklopedicheskiy spravochnik* (Tatars of Uzbekistan: an encyclopedic reference). Kazan: Institute of Tatar Encyclopedia and Regional Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan (in Russian).

Tatarica Available at: <https://tatarica.org/ru> (in Russian)

About the Author:

Khamidullin Bulat L., Candidate of Historical Sciences, Lead researcher, M. Khasanov Institute of Tatar Encyclopedia and Regional Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan; bulat.antat@mail.ru

Информация об авторе:

Хамидуллин Булат Лиронович, кандидат исторических наук, ведущий научный сотрудник, Институт татарской энциклопедии и регионоведения им. М. Хасанова Академии наук Республики Татарстан; bulat.antat@mail.ru



Статья поступила в журнал 01.02.2025 г.
Статья принята к публикации 01.04.2025 г.