

***Chitalishtas, Local Communities and Folk Culture  
in the Bulgarian Nation Building Period***

*Stela Nenova*  
(Summary)

The author studies the first years after the introduction of the *chitalishte* institution when these cultural centres appeared and established themselves in the dynamic sociocultural context of the local communities – first in some of the well-developed Bulgarian towns and later in many of the Bulgarian villages. *Chitalishte* is a cultural and educational institution and is thus studied in the context of the modernization, educational and nation building ideas pertinent in the 1860s and 1870s. At that time the institution developed its specific features (its local nature, complex functions, autonomous social form of governance). The article presents the decisive moments certifying for the institutional activity of the *chitalishtas* with an accent on these issues which show close relations to the folk culture, which was as a need and as a type of communication dominant in the local culture.

**Keywords:** *chitalishtas*; local communities; folk culture; cultural heritage

Stela Nenova  
Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies  
with Ethnographic Museum – BAS  
Bl. 6 Acad. Georgi Bonchev Str.  
1113 Sofia, BULGARIA  
stela.nenova@iefem.bas.bg