

**Acta Scientifica Naturalis**

Former Annual of Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen: Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Geography  
Journal homepage: [asn.shu.bg](http://asn.shu.bg)

**Editorial Note: Natural Sciences - where Science meets Beauty****Dimcho Zahariev**

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The Natural Sciences - where Science meets Beauty is a new logo of Journal Acta Scientifica Naturalis. The new vision of the Editorial team is the cover of the Journal to show the natural sights of Bulgaria, where the basic organization is located: Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen. This is, in a way, a continuation of the tradition of the Editorial team so far to promote the works of famous artists from the region. We have changed objects, but we want to preserve the vision of the connection between science and the world around us. Again the leading motive will be beauty. It can be found everywhere around us. Nature is the primary source of beauty, and art strives to find it and keep it on the canvas for as long as possible.

On the cover of the Journal is published a photo of one of the most beautiful mountains in Bulgaria – Pirin Mountain. It is a small but beautiful mountain located in the southwestern part of the country. In fact, Bulgaria is a small country - with an area of 110 994 square km, on whose territory there are a very large number of mountains - a total of 39 in number. Moreover, they occupy only 30% of the country's area. The Bulgarian mountains are relatively young. Most belong to the Balkanida geological massif, which is part of the Alps-Himalayan mountain range. The latter is considered to be the youngest formed on Earth. The geological connection between the Balkanida geological massif and the Asian mountains is explained by their common origin. According to one theory, the Bulgarian mountains have risen from the bottom of a giant ocean known as Tethys, along with the southern parts of continental Europe and the southwestern parts of continent Asia.

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The oldest known name of the Pirin Mountain is Orbelus. With this name, the ancient Thracian tribes living in these lands named this mountain. In Thracian, the name means „snow-white“, because of the snow-capped peaks. The modern name of the mountain is given by the later inhabitants of the same lands - the Slavs. The Slavs called it Perrin or Perun. Both names are names of the supreme god of the Slavs. He is known to have two sides: The first side is a benefactor who promotes the good deeds of people by giving them rain that brings life and fertility. The other party is a just judge who punishes by sending thunder and lightning. Perun's image corresponds to the Greek god Zeus, to the Roman god Jupiter and to the Scandinavian god Thor.

Pirin Mountain is a small mountain with an area of 2585 square kilometers. In this small area are collected 98 peaks with a height of more than 2500 meters above sea level. In Pirin there are two peaks over 2900 m, seven peaks over 2800 m, seventeen peaks over 2700 m, thirty-two peaks over 2600 m and forty peaks over 2500 m. The three highest peaks are of marble and others are among the highest are made of granite. The cover photo shows the highest peak of the mountain - Vihren Peak (2914.3 m above sea level). This is the second highest peak in Bulgaria after the Musala Peak in Rila (2925 m above sea level). Within Europe, Vihren Peak is eighth in height. In the southwestern part of the Pirin Mountain in the layer of sedimentary deposits can be seen the beautiful and picturesque Melnik Rock Pyramids. The highest rock pyramids are in the area of the village of Karlanovo. Their height reaches 100 meters.

One of Pirin's greatest treasures is the beautiful lakes. Their number is impressive - a total of 186. They are of glacial origin and some of them are located in small and large glaciers cirques. Because of their origin, they are relatively deep, clear, and because of their height, they are very cold.

Pirin is a mountain with very rich biodiversity. So far more than 1340 species of higher plants have been identified, which is about 1/3 of all known higher plants in Bulgaria. 330 moss species and 490 algae species are also known. Particular attention is paid to local endemics among plants. These are plants that are found only in Pirin Mountain and nowhere else on Earth. They are 18 in number. In Pirin Mountain is the oldest coniferous tree in Bulgaria of the species *Pinus heldreichii* over 1320 years old. Fungi in the mountain are represented by more than 370 species and lichens are more than 420 species.

The abundance of animal species is very high. Over 2980 species and subspecies of invertebrates are known. This includes 300 rare species, 228 endemic species, 176 relics and 18 species present in the World and European Lists of Endangered Species. Vertebrates are about 240 species. Birds (166 species) and mammals (50 species) predominate in vertebrates.

Part of the territory of Pirin Mountain has been declared a national park and a protected area by the European Ecological Network "Natura 2000". Pirin National Park is included in the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

## II

**Front Cover**

Vihren Peak (2914.3 m above sea level): a view from Vihren hut. It is the highest peak in Pirin Mountain, Bulgaria and eighth in height within Europe.

Photo by Prof. Dimcho Zahariev.

Date of photo: August 1, 2008.