

РЕЦЕНЗИИ И АНОТАЦИИ  
REVIEWS AND ANNOTATIONSREVIEW OF THE NEWLY PUBLISHED MONOGRAPH  
ON OSMAN PAZVANTOĞLU'S LIBRARY IN VIDIN  
AND ITS PUBLISHED CATALOGUE**Gabriela Angelova***University of Library Studies and Information Technologies,  
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**Abstract:** *This review focuses on the recently published monograph by Prof. Stoyanka Kenderova. The book provides insights into the history, thematic scope, and the catalogue of the Vidin Vakuf Library (1837–1887) established by Osman Pazvantoğlu. The work represents a logical progression of an enduring interest in the subject and offers significant contributions to the realm of Ottoman studies and the history of vakuf libraries within the Bulgarian territories of the Ottoman Empire.*

**Keywords:** *Osman Pazvantoğlu; Vidin Vakuf Library; catalogue; 1837–1887*

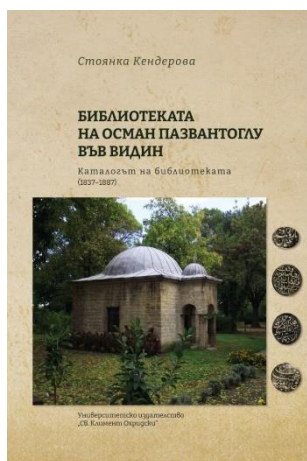


Fig. 1. Kenderova's, St., (2024). *The Library of Osman Pazvantoğlu in Vidin: (1837–1887)*

Professor Stoyanka Kenderova's recent book, *The Library of Osman Pazvantoğlu in Vidin: The Catalogue of the Library (1837–1887)* (fig. 1), addresses the complex issues of several particularly interesting and deftly integrated scholarly disciplines. The present work merges the intricacies of Ottoman studies with the diverse perspectives of the Book History and studies of provenance. The author's primary research objective is to provide an insight into the catalogue of the Vakuf Library in Vidin, founded by Osman Pazvantoğlu. A further objective of the research is the identification of all the manuscripts and old printed books that are currently present in the collections of the St. st. Cyril and Methodius National Library of Bulgaria (NLCM) and recorded in the catalogue of the Vidin Library.

The book was published at the end of 2024 with the support of the St. Kliment Ohridski University Press and the Research Centre of the Higher Islamic Institute (Kenderova 2024).

The author's broad professional experience and scholarly expertise in the field are evidenced by many academic publications on various subjects, for which she has received international recognition. The library of Osman Pazvantoglu in Vidin has been a persistent area of interest in Prof. Stoyanka Kenderova's scholarly pursuits. Over the years, she has progressively approached the topic through various perspectives, dealing with aspects related to the history and description of the Osman Pazvantoglu's library (Kenderova 2004; 2008; 2018; 2019; 2020), as well as specific thematic segments of the vakuf library (Kenderova 2013; 2023). Professor Kenderova addresses important issues concerning both the library's historical course and equally emphasizing on contemporary concerns, such as its current institutional status and the present location of once united holdings of the library. The present comprehensive work is a natural progression of scholarship in the field, and represents the result of many years of dedicated research.

The book's conceptual framework involves two main parts; the first comprises five chapters. In the first part of the monograph, the author introduces the reader to the biography of Osman Pazvantoglu and the complex political context surrounding the establishment of the Vakuf library in Vidin. Particular attention is devoted to the library's catalogue, which is preserved within the *sicil* collection of the NLCM. The study examines in detail the traditions of cataloguing within the Ottoman Empire, alongside the codicological, paleographical, and structural features of the catalogue and the elements of the individual manuscript and printed book records.

The focus of the study is directed towards the library's contents, which are of obvious importance. To this purpose, a detailed analysis of the thematic sections of the catalogue is made, with a particularly critical approach to its original layout. The author puts forward the argument that a number of works, originally assigned to certain rubrics, need to be reclassified in order to more accurately reflect the actual thematic and genre proportions within the collection. The thematic analysis follows the traditional Islamic classification of knowledge, beginning with the fundamental manifestations of Islamic spirituality and scholarship: copies of the Qur'an and Hadiths, works of exegesis and jurisprudence. The analysis extends in depth to other branches of knowledge, including philosophy, philology, history, geography, and astronomy, which are regarded as auxiliary sciences in the hierarchy of the traditional classification used.

The individuals who donated books play a vital role in shaping the collections of vakuf libraries – a role almost as important as that of the founder. Consequently, an entire chapter is devoted to them, focusing on the system of private book donations to the vakuf and the contributors mentioned in the library's cata-

logue, as well as those documented in the endowment notes in the books. A particularly interesting aspect is the study of their social status, profession and educational background.

The final chapter of the book's first section introduces the metrics of the library collection's content and quantitative characteristics. The chapter pays special attention to the prehistory and later events that influenced the institutional status and current location of the collections of the Vidin Vakuf Library in Bulgaria and Turkey.

The second part of the study presents the original structure of the library catalogue. The records elements include the authors, the titles of the works, the donors, the type of script used, the number of volumes, leaves and lines, as well as the shelf marks of the units found *de visu*. In order to identify the codices, a total of 700 volumes from the Oriental Manuscripts Collection of the NLCM were examined. As a result, the catalogue presented in the study was further supplemented with descriptive, palaeographic and codicological data. The research is supported by a large number of primary sources and the most important catalogues and bibliographies of Arabic-script literature. A diverse range of archival sources, including documents, manuscripts, Vidin *sicil* examples, and materials from the Beyazit State Library and the Austrian National Library, have been integrated into scholarly discourse, illuminating the collection's provenance.

The scholarly apparatus of the monograph is particularly extensive and complex. It includes a chart of the adopted transliteration standard, which ensures consistency and clarity in the presentation of titles and terms in their corresponding languages – Ottoman Turkish, Arabic or Persian. As the book has plenty and diverse illustrations an illustration index table is also provided. The bibliography is comprehensive, covering both primary and secondary sources, and demonstrates the depth of research into the issue. Of particular value is the list of Vidin manuscripts and printed editions found in the NLCM, offering detailed descriptions and shelfmarks of Pazvantoglu's library collection. The publication is accompanied by a precise and multi-component corpus of indices, which serve the content by means of personal names, toponyms, titles of works and names of vakuf donators and others. This multifaceted reference apparatus is of particular importance for engaging with studies that employ an interdisciplinary methodology. The organization of the book's content affords both convenient and efficient access for research and reference, positioning it as an essential tool for scholars engaged in the research field.

The book typographic design is distinguished by high-quality professional work, as well as high aesthetic value and functionality. The volume is bound with a hardcover and features a plenty of high-quality illustrative materials, both in black and white and in colour, which are integrated into the text or presented in an appendix. The visual materials are carefully chosen to contribute to the better understanding of the context of the particular parts of the study. The text layout facilitates easy orientation, the font is readable, and provides a pleasant contrast

with the paper. The numerous tables are formatted in a reader-friendly manner, in accordance with their composition and the number of their components.

Professor Stoyanka Kenderova's monograph, "The Library of Osman Pazvantoglu in Vidin: Catalogue of the Library (1837–1887)", represents a landmark interdisciplinary study, characterized by its rigorous methodology and scholarly precision. Central to this research is the ambitious endeavor to reconstruct the dispersed Vidin Vakuf Library, both bibliographically and institutionally— a task requiring considerable expertise and a well-defined methodological framework. By presenting newly identified specimens from this library, the study establishes a paradigm for the scientifically rigorous examination of Ottoman literary heritage within Bulgarian territories. Furthermore, the meticulous analysis of the catalogue's contents facilitates the reconstruction of the intellectual predilections and cultural perspectives of the region's Muslim populace during the Ottoman Empire period. Consequently, this monograph provides a complex analysis of the historical, cultural, religious, and political aspects of Vidin during that era, rendering it an invaluable resource for scholars in Ottoman studies, history, religious and literary history, regional studies, bibliography, and other related disciplines. This research significantly enriches our understanding of Ottoman cultural heritage, offering a detailed and nuanced reconstruction of a vital intellectual repository. Encompassing over 2,600 manuscripts and printed books, this collection stands as the most extensive among vakuf libraries in Bulgarian lands, thus amplifying its scholarly significance. Moreover, it lays a crucial foundation for future research by offering a meticulously curated catalogue and a methodological framework that can be applied to other similar collections, thereby ensuring the preservation and scholarly accessibility of this important historical legacy for generations to come.

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