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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

VAQF IN THE SAFAVID PERIOD

Nozhat Ahmadi

INTRODUCTION

Vaqf – an inalienable charitable endowment under the Islamic law – has existed among Muslim peoples and nations throughout the ages. Although vaqf (plural owqāf) was declared for different reasons and different issues, the practice of allocating real estate property for the preservation and protection of religious special causes has always had the same origin.

Vaqf was part of the same story in Safavid times. What makes vaqf distinct in terms of content in this period in Iranian history is the emphasis its benefactors put on supporting and expanding Twelver Shi’ism. The Safavid era is known as a period of expansion of vaqf, although to substantiate such a claim, one must compare the number and quality of various vaqf properties in different periods and figure out their true number based on solid documentation. At first glance, however, the evidence in the form of extant documents suggests a proliferation of vaqf properties in the Safavid period and the keen attention the rulers of this dynasty paid to this issue.

The present study aims to summarize the conditions of vaqf in the Safavid period, from beginning to end, and describes the structure of this institution and its performance and, if possible, analyze its data.

BACKGROUND OF VAQF

Vaqf as a religious institution goes back to the pre-Islamic period, but after the coming of Islam and its territorial expansion, various offices were created to deal with the affairs of Islamic lands by adopting different subsidiary nations’ customs with regard to this very issue. Over time, the diversity of such offices increased and a bureau was established named the Divān of Righteousness and Charity (in Arabic divān al-berr va’s-sadaqāt), the duty of which was to address vaqf issues. Then, vaqf became independent and an ‘office of owqāf’ was created. As reported, an office of owqāf was first introduced in the eleventh-century Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt. At that time, the other name of this bureau was the divān al-abbās, meaning the Office of Endowments. This office was tasked to administer the public and private endowments. Private endowments here refer to endowments bequeathed by individuals, while public ones refer to properties allocated by a government for the promotion of the faith.
This office, moreover, supervised the wages and pensions of clergy members, scholars, reciters and imams of mosques. There certainly have been other governments to have such administrative departments or, if not, other offices such as the Divan of Righteousness used to perform such duties.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE SAFAVID GOVERNMENT AND THE SURVIVAL OF VAQF

When Shāh Esmā‘il I (r. 1501–24), the founder of the Safavid state, found out that the power of the sword was insufficient for the formalization of Shi‘ism and mass conversion, he decided to develop and expand the faith through a policy of proselytization. One of the ways he chose to do this was by inviting Shi‘i scholars living outside Iranian borders, especially scholars from Jabal ‘Amel in Lebanon. Many of these accepted his invitation. Some immigrated to Iran with official invitations and others moved to the country on account of its reportedly favorable conditions. Those favorable conditions were characterized by the existence of a safe political space for Shi‘is and the possibility of promoting Shi‘ism as well as material and financial resources, much of which was provided by vaqf.

The Safavid dynasty, with its long history of Sufism and Sufi leadership, and having survived and come to political power principally with the support of endowments and offerings, was intimately familiar with the tradition of vaqf. In fact, the Safavid government inherited the vaqf tradition from its predecessors and turned the objective of its creation and existence from the promotion of Sunnism to Shi‘i proselytizing. To that end, Shāh Esmā‘il at the beginning of his reign created important positions such as ‘attorneyship of the invaluable soul’, ‘amir of amirs’, amir al-omarā, and ‘ministry of supreme divan’, divan-e a’lā. He also appointed somebody as the sadr, or chancellor. The incumbent held the supreme authority to deal with charities and endowments. The sadr, in fact, was the president of the divan of owqāf and supervised the divān until the end of this dynasty in one way or another. So the divān of owqāf was managed under the supervision of ‘sadors’, one of the five main administrative positions at the beginning of the Safavid period. The incumbent of this position enjoyed the highest authority in the administration of owqāf and as President of the divān of owqāf presided over religious matters until the end of the Safavid period.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE INSTITUTION OF VAQF IN THE SAFAVID PERIOD

The Safavid monarchs were highly circumspect in their choice of sadrs and tried to select them from among direct descendants of the Prophet, sādāt. But they were also fearful of a concentration of power in the hands of the sadr. Therefore, they devised strategies to reduce their power. Accordingly, Shāh Tahmāsib I (r. 1524–76) concurrently appointed two people to this position. The responsibility of the sadr was not only the administration of owqāf, but also the promotion and propagation of religion. Since he enjoyed considerable financial resources, a sadr was in a good position to promote religion and fight evil-doing. Hasan Beyk Rumlu said about one
of the chancellors called Amir Mo‘ezz al-Din Mohammad Esfahāni that during his eight-year position as sadr (1536–44), he tried to promote religion and fight activities contrary to the shari‘a.8

Moreover, the sadrs were in charge of performing other tasks related to owqāf and income earned from endowments in one way or another. The author of the late Safavid manual of governance, the Ta‘khrat al-moluk, describes the task of a chancellor as the ‘appointment of Islamic judges (hākem-e shar‘) and managers of the endowments of the class tafvidi, and the leadership (rish-safidi) of all the [persons called] sayyed, ‘ālem, pl. ‘olamā, modarres, sheykh al-eslām, pish-namāz, qāzi, motavalli, hāfez, and of the rest of the servants of shrines, schools, mosques, and shrines (begā‘ al-kheyr).9

In addition to the administration of owqāf, a sadr had other tasks to perform. Although many of those were related to owqāf in one way or another, some of them were relatively unrelated to it.10 However, the position of a chancellor underwent some changes during that period. The sources report the murder of Amir Sayyed Sharif al-Din, the sadr of Shāh Esmā‘īl I during the Battle of Chaldiran (1514).11 There is no other report confirming the presence of chancellors in battles at the end of that period. In addition, in the second half of the Safavid period, chancellors were relieved from some duties due to the establishment of positions such as ‘sheykh al-eslām’ (jurisprudence) and, subsequently, ‘mollabāshi’ (religious teachership).

Doubtlessly, chancellors had some assistants for administering the affairs of owqāf. There are no specific references to organizations under the institution of owqāf and the available sources mention organizations in relation with the organization of owqāf only sporadically.

The sources indicate that sadrs supervised endowments with the assistance of their ministers of exchequer, agents, and assistants. These included ‘assistants of delegated endowments’, ‘trustees’, ‘ministers of owqāf’, ‘supervisors’, ‘ministers of the exchequer’, and other ‘staff of endowments affairs’.12 Since these functionaries were appointed by the sadr, they operated under his control and supervision. The domicile of those staff members was in the guard house (keshik-khāna) of the ‘Āli Qāpu, the ceremonial section and audience hall of the royal palace, where they visited on particular days of the week accompanied by the divān-beyi, Chief Justice, who was responsible for the implementation of the sentences handed down by the sadr.13 Sadrs appear not to have had any subordinates tasked with this implementation. The reason for this seems to have a desire to set limits to their power. Considering their already extensive spiritual and financial power and influence, adding the implementation of their sentence to their jurisdiction might have made them a danger to the government. This fear or distrust was not limited to the rulers, but also emerges from the deeds of some endowments, whose benefactors stipulated that the sadr and his subordinates must not interfere with the trustees’ affairs and interrogate them.14

In the pre-Safavid period, a divān had been founded for the administration of endowments. This divān was responsible for the collection of earnings obtained from endowments and the administration of accounts. Moreover, if a benefactor had not designated a trustee for his own endowments, or for whatever reason, those who had been able to be appointed as trustees of endowments were no longer alive, sadrs and their divāns (bureaus) had the responsibility to appoint trustees. In addition,
the *divān* was responsible for administering affairs of teachers, imams, supervisors, muezzins, and all jobs and professions related to endowments in one way or another.

In the Safavid period, the name of this *divān* was the ‘Department of Endowments’. The *sadr* was at the head of this department and supervised all affairs related to it. Ministers of endowments exchequers were considered vice-chancellors responsible for administering affairs in the absence of chancellors. According to the French merchant-traveler Chardin, whose observations date from the 1670s, a minister of exchequer was appointed by the shah himself; as a result, they were responsible for administering all affairs in the *sadr*’s absence.

As mentioned, Shāh Tahmāsb I appointed two people concurrently as *sadr*, and this division more or less continued until the end of the Safavid government. Although no separation had been determined in their tasks and apparently the two jointly and cooperatively administered affairs, a separation of their tasks resulted in the advent of the two distinct positions of the *sadr-e khāssa* ‘chancellor of private affairs’ and the *sadr-e ‘āmma*, ‘chancellor of public affairs’ in the second half of the Safavid period, each with separate duties and tasks to perform. They cooperated only regarding some affairs. Probably, the necessity of separating powers into ‘chancellor of private affairs’ and ‘chancellor of public affairs’ was felt since Shāh ‘Abbās I (r. 1587–1629) or his successor, Shāh Safi I (r. 1629–42), in accordance with the expansion of endowments, particularly with the tremendous amount of royal endowment income.

With regard to much of the income, chancellors were responsible for the administration of endowments. Hence, they could arbitrarily determine salaries and wages of officials and staff of endowment affairs, teachers, pupils, and others who dealt with endowments and religious places in one way or another.

The office of *sadr* was a coveted position since *sadr* s enjoyed an elevated social status while earning a substantial income. Therefore, *sadr* s were mostly selected from among the royal family. However, having consanguineal or affinal ties with the royal family did not guarantee the security of this position and as other officials, chancellors were also exposed to conspiracies and intrigues. Kaempfer narrates the story of Shāh Soleymān’s private chancellor who was imprisoned in the context of a conspiracy organized by the *sheykh al-eslām* of Kerman (who had been dismissed by the chancellor).

**EXPANSION AND DIVERSITY OF ENDOWMENTS**

The expansion of endowments in the later Safavid period was so great and conspicuous that European travelers and residents of Isfahan paid significant attention to it, with Engelbert Kaempfer observing that ‘a true understanding of conditions at the Iranian court’ is not possible without an accurate understanding of the institution of *vaqf*. Indeed, *vaqf* involved everyone who mattered in society, from the shah to members of the royal house, from courtiers to merchants and physicians, and especially elite women. The volume of extant deeds of endowment, even of endowed buildings, suggests that there was great enthusiasm for the institution of endowment in the society of that time. Such enthusiasm could be because of faith in God or as a way of presenting oneself and gaining acceptability in the society due to the credit that endowment brought to the benefactor. Either motive is difficult to
prove. The cliché texts of the endowment deeds state that benefactors’ acts of charity sprang from sincerity and were driven by good faith and for the sake of the welfare of the people and the pleasure of God, cannot be taken at face value, though. The only thing that can be said with confidence is that in each period, benefactors endowed their property to something which attracted the attention of public opinion. In addition to public opinion, general policies of the government should be considered in case of kings and the royal family as well as statesmen who enjoyed the attention of benefactors.

Given that the founder of the Safavid state professed Twelver Shi‘ism, it is only natural that the largest part of endowments either were proclaimed directly in the service of that faith and its promotion or indirectly supported it. There were also endowments that were merely used for public works or in support of a certain group of the community such as orphans or the poor. Clearly, the main aim of endowments in all societies was public works and charity for the pleasure of God.

ENDOWMENTS AT THE SERVICE OF DEVELOPING RELIGIOUS SITES

One practice common among all nations and religions is the giving of gifts, offerings, and endowments to temples and religious sites. Thus, it was natural for the Safavid government, which ruled in the name of a particular ideology, to claim that it was mandated to promote Shi‘ism.²⁴ It even used coercive power to establish its own religious beliefs, to resort to endowment and vaqf. The Safavids, from the beginning, employed vaqf for the reconstruction and development of religious buildings.

In the Safavid period, Shi‘i buildings and shrines received special attention. In addition, efforts were made to not only make up for negligence of previous governments regarding those places, but also to reconstruct and develop them as centers of Shi‘i activities by giving offerings and endowments. The sources report that when Shāh Esmā‘īl I captured the ‘Atabāt, the Shi‘i holy shrines of Iraq, he made a special effort to reconstruct them.²⁵ Some parts of those endowments and offerings were allocated directly for the construction of holy shrines, some for furniture and facilities such as carpets, lighting, air refreshers, and some parts for their guesthouses, pantries, etc. In addition, some amount of endowments was allocated for the upkeep of people who had emigrated from other cities and resided near those shrines.

Allocating endowment earnings for the holy shrines continued until the end of Safavid rule. Even when they were under the control of the Ottoman Empire and outside that of the Safavid government, there were individuals who allocated endowments for the shrines. The Āstān-e Qods-e Razā, the Holy Shrine of Emām Rezā in Mashhad had – and has – a special status in this regard so that efforts were made to encourage more people to reside in Mashhad. Indeed, Shāh ‘Abbās I explicitly encouraged the pilgrimage to the Āstān-e Qods-e Razā so as to prevent species from leaving Iran with Iranian pilgrims traveling to the ‘atabāt.²⁶ Therefore, the endowment of property was explicitly allocated for the residents of this city. Since the region of Khorasan was repeatedly invaded by Uzbeks and suffered population loss as a result, the government was concerned to increase its population and
provide for its security. To this end, the Safavid government made various Kurdish tribes migrate to Khorasan and settle there.²⁷

On the basis of the surviving endowment deeds from the Safavid period, it can be said with confidence that *vaqf* had a significant role in the development of especially Mashhad and the surrounding region of Khorasan.²⁸ Lateral installations and utilities considered for the Holy Shrine of Emām Rezā could provide a lot of facilities for pilgrims. In addition, they could act as encouragement for pilgrimage and more importantly for permanent residence and immigration to this city.²⁹

The Safavids never neglected the tomb of their forefather, Safi-al-Din Ardabili, either, since they considered it a sacred shrine, too. Since its foundation, this sanctuary received attention of Sufism so that they allocated a lot of endowments and offerings to it.³⁰

Furthermore, the Safavid government constructed beautiful and magnificent mosques during the 220 year-span of its life time, and it endowed a great deal of property for the sake of maintaining these. For example, a large number of endowments were allocated to Isfahan’s Jāme’a ‘Abbāsi Mosque (also known as Shāh Mosque or Emām Mosque) as well as the Sheykh Lotfollāh Mosque, both constructed by Shāh ‘Abbās I.

The restoration of those places and the development of their buildings were not sufficient for them to meet their goals, therefore, the development of pilgrimage routes received as much attention, as did trade routes. Pilgrimage and trade have a great deal in common specially in terms of routes, and thus cannot be separated. Consequently, the security of routes and caravansaries received much attention. Many people even dedicated endowments for the construction of those places.³¹

Schools are also included in the roster of religious endowments. In light of our limited knowledge of the formal features of Shi’ism in Iran at the time, Shāh Esmā’īl I and then Shāh Tahmāsb had sought to support Shi’i intellectual centers by supporting Shi’i clerics in Iran and inviting Twelver Shi’i clerics and scholars from Jabal ‘Amel in Lebanon as well as founding schools which were mainly based on endowment earnings.³² Although rulers themselves were among the greatest benefactors of their time, prioritizing *vaqf* and other endowments for their own political and religious aims such as the promotion of ‘the Twelve Saviors Sect,’³³ these measures were not considered government activities, but were realized under the umbrella of *vaqf* offerings and salvation.

Over time, benefactors continued to found schools in order to educate new generations of scholars familiar with Shi’ism in different cities, especially capitals and religiously important cities.

In the case of endowment of schools, not only their material construction was considered, which should have all requirements, from the placement of classrooms to locations for the residence of seminary students, but also their running costs, supply of teachers’ tuition, and even scholarships for seminarians. But benefactors might also mention conditions regarding how schools should be managed in their deeds of endowments. Those conditions depended on the circumstances.³⁴

Some endowment deeds go into great detail about conditions for employing teachers, but most of the time they accepted the trustees’ ideas for the employment of teachers. During their life time, a number of benefactors appointed certain people
as teachers of schools. At times, they prescribed criteria for teachers. They might also select a distinguished scholar to employ teachers.

Even when benefactors did not directly mention conditions for the employment of teachers, they might recall some general conditions for a qualified teacher such as having a commitment to Twelver Shi’ism, being a master of the religious sciences, being present on time at school (and sometimes residing on the school premises), administering seminary students’ affairs, and not being morally and socially corrupt or compromised. In addition, endowment deeds typically mention the amount of teachers’ salaries, conditions of their presence at schools, their duties toward seminary students, etc. The reason for benefactors’ emphasis on employing qualified teachers was teachers’ status at schools. In fact, the more famous, virtuous, and knowledgeable teachers were at those schools, the more reputable these were.

Some benefactors looked askance at certain ways of thinking, considering these morally reprehensible. Therefore, they saw them as impermissible for both teachers and seminary students. They even saw the expulsion of students who studied such blameworthy disciplines as the duty of teachers.

Since one of the motivations for founding such schools in this period was the promotion of Shi’ism, benefactors were attentive to the selection of students. One of the criteria for inclusion was having a commitment to Twelver Shi’ism. However, each school assigned its own principles and conditions for students, such as having a commitment to Twelver Shi’ism, academic achievement, and being permanently present at school. The emphasis on students’ permanent residence was that a school empty of students made it inefficient and, really, pointless. This condition applied to those schools that had residence facilities for permanent students; as a result, it did not cover those who were at schools for studying one or two courses temporarily. To reduce the strictness of this condition, particularly for married students, there were some exceptions which means that students were allowed to stay in schools for one or two nights a week. All in all, the presence of students at schools and keeping the lights on at night for swotting were highly emphasized and turning off the lights without reasonable excuse was prohibited. Some benefactors even insisted that students should not have any other concern but studying. They mostly stipulated that ‘students should not have other activities except for educating religious sciences’. Finally, benefactors also put a heavy emphasis on moral issues, insisting that teachers should be careful that students would not become morally compromised, otherwise, teachers should expel them. Occasionally, benefactors had different interpretations of moral vices. For example, in the late Safavid period, any tendency toward philosophy and mysticism was seen as moral corruption at some schools. A prominent example is the endowment deed of the Madrasa-ye Maryam Beygom engraved on a stone tablet and inserted in the wall of the school. This endowment deed explicitly states that ‘books of fantasy sciences, i.e. suspect sciences known as the rational sciences and philosophy should not be included in the religious sciences’. In addition, in his endowment deed, Sheykh ‘Ali Khān Zangana stipulated that ‘when teachers and students use the rational sciences, which are against the shari‘a, without criticizing them or nullifying them, their salaries and wages should be cut and they should be expelled as well’.

Benefactors’ endowment of books to schools was another story. In addition, the public endowed one or several books to schools. However, those books were mostly
religious ones. Nowadays, a large number of those books can be found in libraries and museums all over the world.

NON-RELIGIOUS ENDOWMENTS

The main aim of the Safavid government was to promote the dominant ideology, Twelver Shi'ism, but vaqf was not limited to religious issues. Under the name and supports of vaqf, welfare and social activities not directly related to religious policies were practiced as well.

Generally speaking, a classification of some endowments under non-religious endowments is not correct since an array of endowments, such as the construction of water reservoirs, wells, bridges, etc., may not be classified as religious endowments. Yet, they may indirectly be considered religious endowments because not only were they influential in the promotion of Shi’ism, but their benefactors also created endowments in order to achieve heavenly reward by pleasing God. Therefore, they demand blessing and forgiveness from the users of endowments.

Furthermore, endowments of public drinking fountains, hospitals, orphanages, and asylums constructed for the poor, the stranded, the homeless and sick people, as well as children and even animals each had a part in improving the conditions of the society. Additionally, buildings such as baths, caravanserais, shops, and inns were constructed and endowed in order that incomes obtained from them could be spent for affairs intended by benefactors, and each was highly influential in reclamation and prosperity of villages and cities as well as roads and pilgrimage routes in Iran. It can be even claimed that endowments resulted in urban development and the expansion of income-generating buildings such as shops around Naqsh-e Jahān Square constructed by Shāh ‘Abbās I. Although income earned from the shops was mostly allocated to Isfahan, some parts – such as the endowments which Ganj ‘Ali Khān set up by imitating ‘Abbās I – were dedicated to the Shrine of Emām Rezā.43

Vaqf in this period was no longer considered a religious endowment designed to foster good deeds for one’s offspring or other individuals. Its aim was rather the maintenance and protection of property, not public works. The reason for the endowment of vaqf was not always clear to the benefactors’ offspring; did benefactors endow their property to prevent its fragmentation after their death? Or, did fear of confiscation of property cause them to endow their property? Or, did they select one of their offspring from among other opposing ones to donate their property to them? These are clear questions with no clear answers.

This type of endowment, also known as endowments involving offspring, vaqf-e owlādi or vaqf-e ghulāmi, was principally willed to males, but endowments for girls in women’s deeds of endowment do exist. Among three offspring endowments set up by women, there are two endowments to girls. The significance of this issue becomes clear when we know that offspring endowments are equivalent to ‘slave endowments’.44 By offspring, benefactors clearly meant male, not female offspring. In fact, only two benefactors mentioned their girls’ names in deeds of endowment.45 Vaqf was also endowed to slaves, particularly for freeing them after their benefactors’ death. This type of vaqf was practiced with regard to hadiths encouraging freeing slaves. It is probable that the highest motivation for this type of vaqf was to do good deeds and achieve heavenly rewards.
**WOMEN AND VAQF**

Vaqf in the Safavid period was intertwined with women’s endowments. A lack of reliable information limits our knowledge of the state of women history, including their role in endowing religious property. Part of this obscurity is surely due to our lack of precise knowledge of the historical status of women at the time. This involves questions such as, how was the degree of women’s participation in public works in the Safavid period; to what extent were women interested in social issues, or to what extent did they enjoy freedom of action participating in social affairs in that period? Women’s motivations for the endowment of properties are significant as well; were there any differences between endowments created by women and those of men? In which years was the number of female benefactors higher? And, to which social status did they belong?

Women clearly were involved in vaqf endowments in various ways. Active female participation in vaqf comes through in statements such as those by Qāzi Ahmad Qommi about the endowments of Princess Māhin Bānu, better known as Shāhzāda Soltānam, the youngest daughter of Shāh Esmā’īl I, or the description by Sayyed Hasan Astarābādi of endowments by Shāh Esmā’īl II’s mother in the Tarikh-e soltānī: Az Sheykh Safi ta Shāh Safi. Quite a few buildings such as schools, mosques, and caravanserais, with their unique architecture and magnificence, were endowed by women.

In the author’s view, there is a significant relationship between the social status and financial capacity of those women on the one hand and the attention they paid to the endowment of property, on the other hand. Similarly, they followed customary policy in society in the type of vaqf they endowed. In other words, even if they did not directly participate in social life, they did not see themselves divorced from society and were active in public works. This issue illustrates their familiarity with policies of the society and responsibility for advancing those policies.

This issue illustrates their familiarity with social policies and the fact that they took responsibility for advancing those policies.

Of the fifty-nine endowment deeds available from the Safavid period, registered in the General Directorate of the Owqāf of Esfahan Province, seven or almost 30 percent are by Isfahani women. In other words, almost one-third of Safavid endowment involved females.

Of these, six cases involve schools, three involve endowment to offspring, five involve endowments to Emāms and Emāmzādas, and three involve endowment to the poor. The dates, registration numbers, benefactors, and purposes of those endowments are given in the following Table 18.1.

This table indicates that women’s endowments, like those of men, were highly varied, and the same classification can be observed in women’s endowments; from endowments to offspring or even slaves and bondwomen to endowments to construction and maintenance of magnificent schools – which women were not allowed to attend. As historical evidence indicates, after the construction of the buildings of schools, those women even endowed other properties such as shops, farmlands, baths, and other income generating endowments for preparing and maintaining the buildings, which were magnificent and elegant in terms of architecture. They also endowed for the running costs of teachers and students.
Moreover, out of conditions stipulated in women’s deeds of endowment for schools, it has been explicitly claimed that the same intellectual and ideological differences that exist among men can also be observed among women. On the back page of the two deeds of endowment remaining from the School of Younger and Elder Grandmothers, a list of endowed books for the use of students is available.\[50\]
In addition to indicating women’s attentions to all requirements of a school, this issue shows that they had no bias regarding teaching philosophy as some philosophical books can be observed among the list of their endowed resources. Furthermore, there were no conditions for expelling students and teachers having read such books as the deed of endowment of Maryam Beygom emphasizes this issue. Assuredly, it can be claimed that women were influenced by their society and enjoyed freedom in stating their thoughts and ideologies.

CONCLUSION

By way of conclusion it can be said that since ancient times, *vaqf*, as an active institution in Iranian society, received special attention and underwent considerable growth in the Safavid period because of political and ideological conditions. This institution more or less maintained its previous structure and hierarchy, but the function of its endowments changed and its emphasis shifted toward the promotion of Shi‘ism. The Safavids used *vaqf* as an instrument for advancing their cultural objectives, so it covered a main part of welfare activities of the society, which on the one hand brought about legitimacy and acceptability for the Safavid, and on the other hand supplied welfare for the society and reinforced the bases of their power. Doubtlessly, the improvement in economic conditions, particularly in the reign of Shāh ‘Abbās I, led to the expansion of *vaqf* in such a way that even during the economic decline at the end of the Safavid period, *vaqf* was considered important in the society.

Endowments enjoyed high diversity and extensiveness in such a way that kings and courtiers tried to endow some of their property for constructing buildings. Women widely participated in endowment as well. The number of properties endowed by females is especially noteworthy in the light of the limitations imposed on them in the realm of social activities or even schooling.

NOTES

2 Ibid.: 141.
4 Navā‘i and Ahmadi 1381/2002: 21–42.
5 The establishment of such a position at the beginning of Shāh Esmā‘īl I’s rise illustrates his attention to endowments as well as his avoidance from despoiling the endowments having received before his reign.
6 Anon 1985: 303.
7 Shāh Tahmāsb 1912: 3.
8 Rumlu 1357/1978: 406. Rumlu wrote about Mo’ezz al-Din that he ‘was a chancellor for eight years and diligently promoted the purest religious teachings with great efforts. He also tried to fight with evil-doing more than other chancellors so that His Excellency struggled to demolish opium dens, brothels, lupanars, bars and casinos’.
10 Such as the *divān* of *ahdās-e arba‘a* (four proceedings) including murder, defloration, teeth breaking and blinding which were under the jurisdiction of the *divān begi*. This *divān* did nothing without the presence of the chancellor. Furthermore, the chancellor was responsible for the king’s religious affairs. See Mirzā Sami’a 1368/1989: 2.
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16 In fact, some departments had their own minister of the exchequer, such as the mostowfi-ye arbāb-e tahāvīl, the mostowfi-ye sarkār-e qurchīyān, and the 'mostowfi-ye sarkār-e gholāmān. See Mirzā Samī'a 1368/1989: 44.
19 Kempfer (Kaempfer) 1363/1984: 121–2.
20 Ibid.: 122.
21 Sometimes tendencies to create a type of tie provoked kings’ anger. For example, this issue was apparently the reason why Mir Mo'ezz al-Din Mohammad Esfahānī, the sadr of Shāh Tāhmāsb, was dismissed from his post. See Qommi 1359/1980: 262–3; Shirāzi 1369/1990: 85; and Rumlu 1357/1978: 406.
22 Kempfer (Kaempfer) 1363/1984: 124.
23 Ibid.: 139.
25 Monshi 1392/2013: 34.
28 See A'zam Nazarkarda 1395/2016.
30 See the manuscript of Sarīh al-moluk which contains a list of endowments allocated to the shrine of Sāfī-al-Dīn Ardabīlī. In University of Tehran Library, Microfilm No: 1655.
31 Āstān Qods-e Razāvī, No. 34.
33 A term mostly mentioned in endowment deeds.
34 In 1094/1683, the teacher’s tuition was specified by Emām Verdi Beyk as 150 dinars daily. See Mortazavi 1396/2017: 190; and Ahmadī 1390/2011: 65–84.
35 Bāygānī-ye Edārā-ye Owqāf-e Mashhād, No. 5.
36 Sotuda 2535/1971: 171.
37 Just as some benefactors prohibited the teaching of philosophy in their schools.
38 The benefactor of Emāmīya School of Shiraz stipulates in his deed of endowment that ‘if no significant achievement can be observed in the academic affairs of a student who resides in the school for seven years, the principal is allowed to expel him and have him replaced by another student’. See Mortazavi 1396/2017: 171.
41 Sepanta 1346/1967: 299.
45 Bāygānī-ye Edārā-ye Owqāf-e Esfahān Nos. 50 and 697.
Such as the School of Younger and Elder Grandmothers as well as Nim Avard School in the Great Bazaar of Isfahan.

Such as Madrasa-ye Jadda-e Kuchek (School of the Younger Grandmother), Madrasa-ye Jadda-ye Bozorg (School of the Elder Grandmother), and the Nim Avard School, all located in the Great Bazaar of Isfahan.

Ahmadi 1390/2011: 85–121.