

## Investigating the Process of Formation of Safavid Bureaucracy

*Mozhgan Esmaili,*

*Associate professor of Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, Iran*

*Corresponding Author: esmailimozhgan20@gmail.com*

*Azadeh Taheri Karimi*

*Assistant Professor of Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, Iran*

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### ABSTRACT

Safavid's king was the highest executive power but still performance of state affairs was not possible without an elaborate administrative set up the state affairs were divided among the two important elements of the country namely Turks and Tajiks, who had an essential and effective role in the administrative system of Iran. Safavid administration was in the hands of seven ministers and prime minister after king was considered as the highest authority. During Safavid Period three courts of financial, Judicial and epistolary were responsible for the main state affairs.

Keywords: Safavid, Formation, Bureaucracy, Diwani system

### Introduction

Safavid period has a particular importance in the history of Iran and that is its religious form, which was the basis of many political, social and cultural changes. In fact, Safavid rulers by prevalence of Shi's sect and their claim of being the descendent of seventh Shi'i Imam Musa al-Kazim (Qazi Ahmad, 1980:64) wanted to get some sort of legitimacy. Their political activities had a very strong Shi'ite form which affected all the aspects of administration. The Safavid considered themselves as exceptional kings of the world who had two adjectives of Siyadat (lordship) and vilayat (guardianship);(Ghazwini,1984:383) according to Savory, the power of Safavid kings rested on three basic parameters. Firstly, the notion of the divine right of Iranian king, which was claimed on the basis that these kings have far-i-izidi (God splendour) which was obtained since pre-Islamic times and in the new form it appeared as shadow of God on earth. Secondly, the pretensions of the Safavid rulers as the representatives of Imam Mehdi (S.A) on earth. The third presumption was concerning the place of Safavid king as murshid-kamil. (Savory, 1987:3) The Second highest power was exercised by the grand wazir or (Sadr-i-Azam) I 'timad ul duleh who was considered as the leading official in the bureaucracy and look

after almost all the affairs of the state. Without his validation, no order could be passed or will be deemed as legal. Tavernier writes that 'Itimad ul duleh ought to be and ahli-qalam since all the affairs of the state were in his hands.(Tavernier, 1984:572) Since the Safavid rule came to power with the help of the Turkmen tribes which later on were called as qizilbash almost all the key posts were in their hands. In fact, the division of all the organs of administration were into two main categories, the dargah (palace) and diwan (chancery) (Jackson, 1986:352).

Safavid administration was in the hands of two elements, the Turks (The men of sword) and the Tajiks (The men of pen). Turks elements had real power till the reign of Shah`Abbas I (AH 995-1038/AD 1587-1629), since he realized that all the internal problems appeared due to internal conflicts between the chiefs of qizilbash, he therefore, by taking the power from them and giving to the third elements composing of different tribes who were loyal to the king (Shah Savan) reduced the powers of the qizilbash.(Savory,2002:66)

According to Tadhkirat-ul-Muluk, the early administration of the Safavids was in the hands of seven umara-i-janiqi, which included the wazir-`i-azam, waqehnavis, diwanbegi along with four umara-i- dulatkhaneh means qurchibashi (commander in chief of the qurchi), qullaraqasi (commander in chief of the ghulam), ishikaqasibashi (Supreme of diwan), tufangchibashi (commander in chief of artillery). During the later Safavid period, nazir (Super intendent) mustufi-ul-mamalik (chief accountant) and amir shikarbashi (hunter) (Mirza Sami`a, 1987:4-5) entered to the group of umara-i-janiqi, otherwise umara-i-iran is divided into two groups, I. umara-i-dulat khaneh, II. Umara-i-sarhad in which the later was further divided into four categories: I. Wulat, II. Biglirbegiyan, III. Khawanin, IV. Salatin.(Ibid:4)

**Grand Wazir:** 'Alijah wazir 'azam-i-diwan-i-'ala was titled as 'itimad-ul-duleh of Iran who was the most leading noble of the state and all the transactions of income of umara-i-dargah and umara-i-sarhad would pass through his t`aliqeh (permission).(Ibid:5)

During the early Safavid period, wakil had the position of the regent through whom all the orders should pass, but later on wazir replaced him, especially from the time of Shah `Abbas I when the power of qizilbash was reduced, grand wazir came to enjoy the greater powers especially in financial matters, he was like the finance minister in the modern governments.(Minorsky,1955:83) Although the mustufi-ul-mamalik was dealing with all tax transactions in the country and without his confirmation grand wazir was not doing any transaction, it seems wazir-i-`azam did not have a fixed amount as his salary but one kind of mustamary in the form of Rasm-ul wizare and in`am-i-salaneh (Ibid:160-164) used to be his perquisites that something like 823 tuman was his mustamary.(Ibid:165)

### **Umara-i-Dulat Khaneh**

Umara-i-dulatkhaneh were considered as the pillars of the state, they were divided into seven classes.

Qurchi-bashi (commander in chief of the armies)

Qullaraqasi (commander in chief of the ghulams)

Ishikaqasibashi (ceremonies chief)

Tufangchiaqasibashi (commander in chief of artillery)

Waqehnavis (Secretary)  
Diwanbegi (Chief Justice)

**Qurchibashi** (Commander in Chief of the Qurchi)

Qurchibashi was one of the umara-i jenaqi which was considered as the most important post after the post of grand wazir, he was considered as a minister for the affairs of the army with the title of amir-ul-umara (Minorsky, 1955:85) for qizilbash troops. There were many qurchi under him who enjoyed great influence in society as they were the king's army men. Their titles were according to the kind of arms they used. They were as an executive force and, usually performed the security services and the king's escort was made by them. Olarious writes qurchibashi was the head of an army with more than 100 thousand bowman, who in the entire country used to live freely and in war time, they gathered under the leadership of qurchi bashi. (Olarious, 1984:324)

**Qullaraqasi** (Commander in Chief of the Ghulams)

He was one of the umara-i-jenqi who was responsible for ghulaman-i-dargah and their mawajib, in'am, tuyul, hamasalih etc. and their salaries were paid (Mirza Sami'a, 1987:7-8) only after his and the wazir's validation.

**Ishikaqasi** (Chief of the Ceremonies)

In fact, arrangements of the assemblies was one of his duties and looking after gaurds was another responsibility entrusted to him. Tavernier writes that they use to tell the envoys how to meet and behave before the king. (Tavernier, 1984:573) Two officers by the designation of lashkarnivis and sarkhat-nivis were working under ishikaqasi. According to Mirza Sam'ia lashkarnivis was considered as the wazir of ishikaqasi who used to affix his seal on all the arqam and ahkam of salary and appointments, even drafting of the arqam of all clerks of diwan from top to bottom was his duty. His salary was 30 tuman. (Mirza Sami'a, 1987, 40-1) While sarkhatnivis was considered as the mustufi of ishikaqasi, all the arqam and ahkam which used to pass by laskarnivis should pass through his khat and his salary was 12 tuman and for ijarat, an additional 500 dinars were paid to him. (Mirza Rafi'a, 1969:541)

**Tufangchiaqasi** (Commander in Chief of the Artillery)

He was head of uzbashiyan (centurion), Jarchibashiyan (Chief herald) and Tufangchiyan who used to sign and verify all the Tuyul, mawajib, in'am and hamesaleh of his followers. (Mirza Rafi'a, 1969:541)

**Waqehnavis**

During Safavid period, the majlisnivis or waqehnavis was considered as the first munshi of the king who was considered as wazir-i-chap (minister who sits on the left side of the king) and he was another muqarrab-ul khaqan and one of the umara-i-janiqi who was the king's confidant and was present in all public and private assemblies and whenever the prime minister or wazir-i-rast (right side minister) was absent, apart from his performing his own duties. One of his duty was sending the replies to the letters of other kings which were received by the Safavid rulers. Another duty of waqehnavis was drawing of the tughra by black ink on the arqam of appointments, mulazimat, hamesaleh and tuyul,

which were issued from *dafater khulud* and also kind of *arqam* whether *belmushafehe* (orally) or according to *t'aliqeh-i- wazirdiwan-i- 'ala* or on the basis of the orders of the *umara* means *hasbul amri 'ala*, the *tughras* were drawn only by him. (Mirza Sami'a, 1987:15-16)

Petitions of the *hukam* and *umara* used to be read and then replies were prepared by him and were placed before the king for approval and in case there should be a *raqam* issued on the basis of his draft (*yaddashat*), the *raqamnivisan* who were working under him would write the *raqam* and then the *tughra* will be drawn and finally the seal of *muhr-i-athar* would be affixed. (Mirza Rafi'a, 1968:92) Due to the importance of his post, he was able to meet the king at any time he desired and his word was reliable for the king. According to Mirza Sami'a, ten officers were working under him one was *raqamnivis-i-diwan'ala* and three helpers, one *sar-rishtehdar* to register the *arqam* and another two *raqamnivis* who wrote the *arqam* which were according to the *musavadih-i-dafatir*, two officers for official service *hasbul-salah* and one *namehnivis*. (Mirza Samia'a, 1987:15) It seems that his fixed salary was 330 *tuman*, and amount of 30 *tuman* (Minorsky, 1955:97) every year was *tankhah* for price of paper which was used in the office. (Mirza Sami'a, 1987:16)

### **Diwanbegi**

The *diwanbegi* was considered as a ministry of justice, with *qadi-ul-qudat* as the head of the institute, who had full authority regarding all civil and penal claims in the entire country and only the king could prevent his decisions. (Chardin, 1957:53)

According to Chardin, the post of *diwanbegi* was the second basic post of the state and the chief justice of the head. (Ibid:238)

Although the *sadr* was supposed to possess superior authority in cases involving capital offences, the fact that such crimes were tried in the *diwanbegi's* tribunal indicates that the supreme authority, in these, as in other legal matters, in fact lay with the *diwanbegi*. In addition, the *diwanbegi's* court was the highest court of appeal. (Savory, 2002:355-56)

*Sadr-i-khaseh* along with the *diwanbegi* used to sit in *kishikkhaneh* in '*Aliqapu* on Saturdays and Sundays and heard the cases there. (Mirza Sami'a, 1987:2)

### **Diwan-i-Istifa** (Financial Court)

*Mustufi-ul-mamalik* (chief accountant) was the head of *daftarkhaneh-i-humayun'ala*, who was one of the *umara-i-'azam*, and his post was very important. In fact all the tax transactions in the country should be done according as the finance minister. Each financial transaction must be verified by him. All *tuyulat*, *hamselijat* of *beglirbegiyan*, *hukam*, *khawanin*, *salatin* and (*rusumat-i-qalam*) had to be validated by him and only after that they could get the payment in fact his validation was considered as trust and reliance of the king. According to Tavernier, *mustufi-ul-mamalik* were accountants of the *khaliseh* and *mamalik* (crown and public lands) and they had the first post in *daftarkhaneh* and all accounts of the King's income and lands leases (*ijarat-i-amlak*) stores, army mobilization expenditures and all the expenditures of supervision should pass through them. (Tavernier, 1984:593)

To appoint mustufi for other places and calling them to account of their faults, if any was also part of his duty.(Mirza Sami'a,1987:17) All the arqam-i-mulazimat and ahkam tankhaah needed his seal and validation(Ibid) In fact any kind of sanad which passed through dafatir-i-diwan-i-'ala should get the signature and seal of mustufi-ul-mamalik and without his information, no sanad would be registered in the dafatir-i-diwani, he used to get round about tuman as his rasmul-istifa.

There were five writers who were also known as sahib-raqaman who used to write arqam-ahkam-i-mulazimat and tankhaah-i-hamesiljat, tuyul, transactions and to check whether these were exactly according to their records. They then sent for verification to the office of mustufi-ul-mamalik.(Ibid)There were four other writers who were called as muhararran-i-sarkarkhaliseh, who used to register information of other sarkarat and keep the accounts of expenditures of arqam-i-manasib wa mulazimat, ahkam-i-tuyulat, hamesalihjat tankhah-i-barati suyurghalat and mu'afiyat.(Ibid:17-18) According to Mirza Sami'a, the following five officials were working under mustufi-ul-mamalik:

Nazir-i-diwan'ala (Superintendent of the high court)

Darugheh-i-daftarkhaneh (Police Secretariat)

Sahib tujeh diwan 'ala (Keepers of the ledgers)

Zabitihnivis(an official in the revenue department of the chief accountant's office)

Awarijehnivisan(Keeper of the registers of individual tax-accounts)(Ibid:17)

### **Nazir-i-diwan'ala**

He was considered as muqarab-ul-hazrat (Ibid: 36) and all the arqam-i-madad ma'ash, mu'afiyat suyurghalat, ahkam-i-hamesaleh, tuyul and salary of umara and arqam-i-manasib of the officials of the country which used to be passed from any daftarkhaneh of any provinces should be affixed with the seal of this office. The liquidation of the accounts of all the public officials such as, that of the ministers and supervisors, was also his duty.(Ibid) Nine writers were working under him, eight of whom used to register and sign the arqam and ahkam while one of them used to correct the accounts and verified them by putting the words khat and shud.(Ibid) It seems the amount of 225 tuman was his salary.(Minorsky,1955:166)

### **Darugheh-i-daftarkhaneh**

In fact the arrangement of the entire daftarkhaneh and punishment of officials of the daftar was his duty and in case if there was any claim and quarrel among this officers, it should be resolved before him. Endorsment of all the ahkam and arqam-i-manasib tankhah, hamesaleh etc. should also be verified by him.(Mirza Sami'a,1987:42)

Sahib-i- tujeh diwan'ala

He was considered as one of arbab-i-qalam of diwan-i-istifa who used to sign and affix his seal on various kinds of Asnad which transacted in the daftarkhaneh. It seems he had twelve writers under him who used to keep the accounts of tankhah, In'am hamesaleh, tuyul, suyurghalat, mu'afiyat of beglirbegiyan, hukam and salatin etc.(Mirza Sami'a,1987:42) All the arqam, ahkam and parwanjat-i-manasib were supposed to be register by him. He used to keep dastur-ul-'amal-i rusumat-i-arbab-i-manasib and in case, any of the officials were dismissed or died it was his duty to confiscated their rusumat. (Ibid)

### **Zabitehnavis**

Zabitehnavis was responsible to keep the accounts of the revenue collected from the entire country. Taxes collected on account of rahdari and darughigi and also of rusumat-i-arbab-i-manasib and rasm-ul-wizareh, wilayat etc.(Mirza Rafi'a,1969:540) He used to check and consider the asnad and drafts of income and expenditure. After approval he used to put his signature on those draft papers and keep them,(Ibid) according to Mirza Sami'a, fifteen writers were working under him. (Mirza Sami'a, 1987:42) He used to get salary as well as tuyul grants. His perquisites included tuyul grant of the value of 50 tuman. He was entitled for a cash salary of 89 tuman and 7516 dinars, while the amount of 103 tuman was fixed as salary of his employed writers.(MirzaRafi'a,1969:1969:540)

### **Awarijehnavisan**

The duty of the awarijeh-nivisan was to keep the accounts of income of the provinces which were placed under their jurisdiction, and also each arqam of mustufi-ul-mamalik and ta'liqa of the grand wazir regarding any other matter. The Awarijehnavisan used to write the phrase sanad dar fulan sarkar zabt shud, on the documents. Checking of the accounts and compare it with the official record was also their duty. In fact, all the arqam, parwanechah and ta'liqechah which were issued regarding any transaction should be registered and verified by the awarijehnavisan and these accounts has to be kept in the office for a specified period as proofs.(Ibid:542) The phrases mulahezeh shud and thabt numayand were used by them for registering the asnad and even asnad regarding madad-i-ma'ash and suyurghal were treated in a similar manner.(Ibid) Their salary and rusumat was different in different provinces. For instance Mirza Rafi'a mentioned that the mawajib and rusumat of some provinces are as follow: (Ibid)

Name of the Province	Mawajib	Local Rusumat
I. Iraq	14 Tuman	15 Tuman+1000 Dangs
II. Fars	15 Tuman	103 Tuman+7000 Dangs
III. Khurasan	15 Tuman	68 Tuman + 6000 Dangs
IV. Azarbayjan	50 Tuman	No Rusumat

### **Joudical Court (Diwan-i-Qada)**

Sadr was considered as head of the diwan-i-qada who looked after the judicial affairs as well as the affairs of the ouqaf. The appointment of hukam-i-shar'and mubashirin-i-ouqaf (Mirza Sami'a, 1987:2) was one of his major responsibility. He was considered as the dean of the ulama, qudat, mudarasan and shikuhul-islam.(Ibid) It seems that the during the safavid period there were two sadrs one for khaseh and another for mamalik, some times both the responsibilities were given to one person.(Ibid:3) Tavernier writes that the sadr has the first position among the clergy class and in the consultative assembly. In other assembles, he sits in a lower place than that of I'timad ul dauleh. He also describes that two persons occupied the position of I'timad ul duleh. He also describes

that two persons occupied the position of sadrs because the muqafat were of two kinds, the royal, and the public, the sadr of muqafat-i-Saltanati was called Sadr-i-khaseh while the sadr for public was called sadr-ul-muqafat.(Tavernier, 1984:588) It seems that during the later Safavid period, the office of sadr was divided between the two persons with different duties. Minorsky says that sadr-i-khaseh was superior to sadr-i'ameh and in the assemblies he used to sit on the left side of the king and sudurs were also called nawab.(Minorsky,1955:73-4) In fact, some of the Safavid rulers wanted to reduce the power of the clergy by giving different posts so that too much power was not vested in one person only and tried to prevent them from interfering in the political acts of the state. Savory's description regarding the post of sadr is that the administration of justice was a complicated affair. During the early Safavid period the sadr, as the head of religious institution, was ultimately responsible for the administration of canon law. The business of the courts, however, was in the hand of a number of other religious officials in addition to the sadr, including the qadi-ul-qudat and the sheikh-ul-islam. As a result, there was a considerable degree of conflict of jurisdiction. At some point, not yet determined, a new post was created in an attempt to draw all these strands together under one overriding authority. The holder of this new office was termed the diwan-begi.

The following three posts were under sadr:

**Qadi**, who used to solve people's problems in his house and diwaniyan had to execute his orders.

**Qadi'askar**, in the early safavid period in Kishik khaneh-i-diwan begiyan, a judge named qadi-'askar was dealing with the matters concerning the soliders but later on his post was only to verify the arqam-i-tankhah-i-mawajib of troops, and without his validation hukam and beglerbegiyan refused to pay their salaries.(Mirza Sami'a,1987:3-4)

Shaikh-ul-Islam was responsible to solve conflicts relating to the common laws. Divorce took place in his presence and confiscation of properties was made by him which was later on handed over to qudat.(Ibid:3)

#### **(Diwan Insha) (Epistolary Court)**

Munshi-ul-Mamalik was another muqarab-ul-khaqan and the king's confidant who used to write some parts of the royal correspondence. In fact it is not clear what was the difference between the waqehnavis's job and munshi-ul-mamalik's job but it seems that the difference was according to the orders issued by them.

Munshi ul mamalik was considered as the head of dar-ul-insha. His duty was drawing of the tughra of hukm-i-jahan mut'a shud on the ahkam which were issued by diwanbegi, tughra of humayun shud on the ahkam-i-tankhah, tuyul, suyurghalat, hamsalajat-i-'askari and talab-i-mulaziman and tughra of farman-i-humayun sharaf-i-nifadh yaft on the letter and mithals which were issued by the sadr.(Ibid:24)

He drew all the tughra in red and golden ink.(Ibid) He had 28 writers in his office.(Ibid) One was munshi-i-diwan who used to write ahkam-i-ilizami which used to pass through the diwanbegiyan. He had 30 tuman as his mawajib-i-hamesaleh. Another writer was namihnavis which had the same amount as munshi-i-diwan as his salary.(Ibid) Other 26 muharrirs were busy to write parwanjat and ahkam-i-daftari and other ahkam such as nishans and faramin which were drafted by munshi-ul-mamalik.(Ibid:316)

During the Safavid period most of the letters related to foreign affairs were written by munshi-ul-mamalik and his colleagues and Minorsky translated this title as foreign minister.(Minorsky,1955:117)

According to Chardin, Munshi-ul-Mamalik's confirmation. The salaries of his clerks were paid. His salary was equal to 50 tuman as tuyul, and from in'am of umara, mawajib wa haq ul sa'iy of 'umal, suyurghal, mu'afi and iqta-i-tamluk from each tuman he obtained 50 dinars. Every year out of the salary of the umara and muqaraban, from each tuman, he obtained 8 dinars and two dangs. From ijarat, each tuman 180 dinars and 1-1/2 dang. (Mirza Rafi'a, 1969:316)

### Conclusion

The king was the highest executive power and he was considered the ultimate authority. Performance of state affairs was not possible without an elaborate administrative set up. Therefore, state affairs were divided among the ministers, who had a subordinate position. Safavid administration was in the hands of seven ministers, and the prime minister, was considered as the second highest authority of the realm. The affairs of the Safavid court were in the hands of umara-i-dulatkhaneh. In fact Safavid's rulers have formed one of the most essential and effective administrative systems in Iran which could bring welfare and prosperity in the country.

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