The study of the *waqf*—the Islamic endowment institution—has always been part of the broad field of Islamic studies. However, for a long time the subject was rather marginal, attracting the interest of a relatively small number of students and scholars. By the end of the twentieth century this is certainly no longer true. In the past decade or two the study of the Islamic endowment institution has been making its way into the M.A. and even the B.A. curricula of university departments specializing in Islamic history and culture, and studies dealing with social and economic aspects of any of the regions of the Islamic world, particularly prior to the twentieth century, hardly ever neglect to include at least some reference to the *waqf*. It is the process which brought about this change of attitude towards the study of the *waqf* institution which concerns me here.

Broadly speaking, I discern three main stages in the development of studies of the Islamic endowment institution in the twentieth century. Two general remarks are in order before I go on to describe these stages. First, I am aware that the division into stages is somewhat artificial and may do injustice to some studies, whose publication date places them in an earlier stage, while their contents belong to a later one. Furthermore, subjects which attracted scholarly attention in earlier times continue to be discussed to this day. My aim is to highlight the broad trends characterizing each of these stages, stressing the innovations in each of them. Second, from the continually growing literature on the *waqf*, only a limited number of studies will be mentioned in the references, by way of examples.

In the first stage the grounds were laid for the study of the Islamic endowment institution. Following in the footsteps of nineteenth and early twentieth century scholars, studies in this stage concentrated in the main on the legal
aspects of the *waqf*.

1) To the study of *waqf* laws, scholars in later decades of the twentieth century added discussions of the legal reforms undertaken in various parts of the Islamic world during the nineteenth and particularly the twentieth century. A small number of translations and scholarly editions of endowment deeds were also produced in this first stage.

It was only in the second stage of development of *waqf* studies that the broader implications of the institution, beyond the legal aspects, began to be discussed on a meaningful scale. This stage was inaugurated by a number of eminent Turkish scholars, who published their studies mainly in the *Vakıflar Dergisi*, as well as by some studies centered on the implications of *waqf* formation on agrarian relations.

The international seminar held in Jerusalem in June 1979 constituted a significant landmark in this stage. Insofar as I know, this was the first international gathering devoted entirely to the Islamic endowment institution. It brought together 27 scholars from several disciplines, dealing with various regions of the Islamic world. The organizers, headed by the late Professor Gabriel Baer, invited the participants to produce papers addressing one of a variety of specific questions, such as, the economic implications of the *waqf*; its significance for the various public services; the *waqf* and the law of succession; the impact of endowments on the social system; the relations between the *waqf* and the state. The sessions of the Seminar focused around these general themes, and a special session was devoted to methodology, with particular emphasis on the use of quantitative analysis in *waqf* studies. The seminar thus introduced a whole new branch of “*Waqf* Studies” and set up an agenda for future studies on the subject.

The idea of the seminar, the topics discussed, as well as the sources and methodology used by some of the participants should all be seen as an integral part of important developments in the study of history at the time, such as the

1) See Heffening, *EI* (1931); The majority of items in his bibliography are studies on legal aspects of the *waqf*. His somewhat shortened article—*Shorter EI* (1974)—includes some more items, all of them treating legal aspects.
3) E.g. Stephan 1944; Massignon 1951, 1953; Darrag 1963; Rabi'i, 1964/5.
4) Some of the early studies are: Barkan 1942; Köprülü 1938, 1942. See also Gibb and Bowen 1957, part II, pp. 165-78 and the bibliography there.