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## **A MULTIFACETED GENIUS OF THE 16TH CENTURY: AN ASSESSMENT OF MATRAKÇI NASUH AND THE MILITARY POLYMATH**

**Abstract:** *Nasuh bin Karagöz bin Abdullah al-Bosnavî, often referred to by art historians as the „Renaissance Man” of the Ottoman Empire, stands out as one of the most distinguished polymaths of the 16th-century Ottoman State, earning his place in the golden pages of history. Renowned for his versatility, intelligence, and skills, Nasuh became a figure recognized above his contemporaries, frequently described as a genius. Despite his reticence regarding personal information in his works, it has been established through his earliest treatise in mathematics that he was of Bosnian origin; the same source also raised the possibility that Matrakçı Nasuh was a product of the devşirme (child-levy) system. Acknowledged as a polymath, Nasuh received his education at the Imperial Palace School (Enderun), subsequently serving in various capacities at the royal court. His contributions spanned the pioneering of Ottoman cartography and miniature painting, as well as the systematization of martial sports, positioning him as an emblem of the synthesis of science, art, and athleticism within the empire. In particular, the designation of 2014 by UNESCO as „The Year of Matrakçı Nasuh“ has underscored his legacy internationally and established the importance of safeguarding this cultural heritage. Nasuh’s legacy continues today through exhibitions bearing his name, ongoing academic inquiry into his works, interpretation of his artistic creations, and the recognition of sports he codified, many of which have influenced contemporary athletic*

*disciplines. His unique perspective on martial arts, mathematical reasoning, and visual documentation is now the focus of both popular and scholarly efforts to promote his cultural significance globally.*

*The present study thus originates from the growing international need to introduce Matrakçı Nasuh's extensive heritage in both folk traditions and cultural history. Identified as a miniaturist, cartographer, historian, calligrapher, mathematician, and master swordsman, Matrakçı Nasuh belongs to the small pantheon of historical luminaries whose multidisciplinary genius continues to shed light from the past to the present. The works he left behind serve as beacons, illuminating the depths of history for subsequent generations. Nasuh, recorded as one of the most versatile and prominent intellectuals of the sixteenth-century Ottoman world, stands out primarily for the works he contributed to Ottoman visual historiography. At the same time, he holds a central position in the literature due to his production of works that reflect the scientific knowledge of his period and were designed for practical educational purposes.*

*Nasuh's oeuvre not only emphasizes the importance attributed to science and art within Ottoman culture but also illustrates the holistic structure of scientific and artistic disciplines of the era. In this respect, Matrakçı Nasuh is regarded as a distinguished representative of the classical Ottoman intellectual type. His work *Beyan-ı Menazil-i Sefer-i Irakeyn*, produced during the reign of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent through his participation in military campaigns, contains detailed city depictions documenting the geography of the Ottoman Empire and constitutes one of the most significant examples of a distinctive narrative style in Ottoman miniature art, characterized by the absence of linear perspective yet grounded in topographical accuracy. Nasuh's works are of great importance in demonstrating the intertwined nature of science, culture, history, and art in the Ottoman period. Moreover, his city depictions focusing on campaign routes occupy a distinctive and early position within Ottoman visual historiography, while also providing valuable data for military logistics and strategic planning. The primary motivation of this study is to demonstrate that Matrakçı Nasuh was not merely a historian and artist within the military culture of the sixteenth-century Ottoman Empire, but also a significant figure who produced works on warfare techniques and military training. Accordingly, the study aims to examine Nasuh's role within the Ottoman military system and emphasizes the necessity of evaluating the methods he developed in weapon training and physical education as integral components of disciplined military training in the Ottoman army. The *matrak* game, developed by Nasuh and bearing his name, was employed as a training method designed to enhance soldiers' reflexes, physical endurance, agility, and close-combat skills.*

*Furthermore, Nasuh's treatises on weapon use and training practices highlight the importance of a disciplined and systematic military education adopted by the Ottoman army. By personally participating in campaigns and documenting conquest routes and military stations through detailed visual*

*representations, Nasuh made significant contributions to the understanding of the logistical structures and geographical dimensions of military operations and campaigns. Representing an approach that prioritizes practical training within Ottoman military thought, Matrakçı Nasuh is therefore considered one of the most original intellectuals of his time for his integration of the theoretical and practical dimensions of Ottoman military thinking.*

**Key word:** *New media and communication, Matrak, Matrakçı Nasuh, Tuhfetül Guzat.*

### SVESTRANI GENIJE 16. VIJEKA: VREDNOVANJE MATRAKČIJE NASUHA I VOJNOG POLIHISTORA/VOJNOG SVESTRANOG UČENJAKA

**Apstrakt:** *Nasuh bin Karagöz bin Abdullah al-Bosnavî, kojeg historičari umjetnosti često nazivaju „renesansnim čovjekom“ Osmanskog Carstva, ističe se kao jedan od najistaknutijih polihistora osmanske države 16. stoljeća, osiguravši sebi mjesto na zlatnim stranicama historije. Čuven po svojoj svestranosti, inteligenciji i vještinama, Nasuh je postao figura prepoznata iznad svojih savremenika, često opisivane kao genije. Uprkos njegovoj suzdržanosti u pogledu ličnih podataka u svojim djelima, kroz njegov najraniji traktat iz matematike utvrđeno je da je bio bosanskog porijekla; isti izvor navodi i mogućnost da je Matrakči Nasuh bio regrutovan putem sistema devşirme. Kao priznati polihistor, Nasuh je obrazovanje stekao u dvorskoj školi (Enderun), nakon čega je obavljao različite dužnosti na carskom dvoru. Njegov doprinos obuhvata pionirski rad u osmanskoj kartografiji i minijaturnom slikarstvu, kao i sistematizaciju borilačkih vještina, što ga postavlja kao simbol sinteze nauke, umjetnosti i atletizma unutar Carstva. Posebno je proglašenje 2014. godine „Godinom Matrakčija Nasuha“ od strane UNESCO-a naglasilo njegovu ostavštinu na međunarodnom nivou i ukazalo na važnost očuvanja ovog kulturnog naslijeđa. Nasuhova baština živi i danas kroz izložbe koje nose njegovo ime, kontinuirana akademska istraživanja njegovih djela, interpretacije njegovih umjetničkih kreacija, te kroz priznavanje sportova koje je kodifikovao, a od kojih su mnogi uticali na savremene sportske discipline. Njegova jedinstvena perspektiva na borilačke vještine, matematičko rezonovanje i vizuelnu dokumentaciju danas je u fokusu kako popularnih tako i naučnih napora da se promoviše njegov kulturni značaj na globalnom nivou.*

*Ova studija, stoga, proizilazi iz rastuće međunarodne potrebe za predstavljanjem opsežnog naslijeđa Matrakčija Nasuha, kako u narodnim tradicijama tako i u kulturnoj historiji. Identifikovan kao minijaturist, kartograf, historičar, kaligraf, matematičar i majstor mačevanja, Matrakči Nasuh pripada uskom krugu historijskih velikana čiji multidisciplinarni genije nastavlja osvjetljavati put iz prošlosti u sadašnjost. Djela koja je ostavio služe kao putokazi*

koji osvjetljavaju dubine historije za buduće generacije. Nasuh, zabilježen kao jedan od najsvestranijih i najistaknutijih intelektualaca osmanskog svijeta šesnaestog stoljeća, ističe se prvenstveno po djelima kojima je doprinio osmanskoj vizuelnoj historiografiji. Istovremeno, on zauzima centralno mjesto u literaturi zahvaljujući stvaranju djela koja odražavaju naučno znanje njegovog vremena, a koja su bila namijenjena praktičnim obrazovnim svrhama.

Nasuhov opus ne samo da naglašava važnost koja se pridavala nauci i umjetnosti unutar osmanske kulture, već i ilustruje holističku strukturu naučnih i umjetničkih disciplina tog doba. U tom pogledu, Matrakçı Nasuh se smatra istaknutim predstavnikom klasičnog osmanskog tipa intelektualca. Njegovo djelo *Beyan-ı Menazil-i Sefer-i Irakeyn*, nastalo tokom vladavine sultana Sulejmana Veličanstvenog kroz Nasuhovo učešće u vojnim pohodima, sadrži detaljne prikaze gradova koji dokumentuju geografiju Osmanskog Carstva i predstavlja jedan od najznačajnijih primjera specifičnog narativnog stila u osmanskoj minijaturi, kojeg karakteriše odsustvo linearne perspektive, ali uz strogu topografsku tačnost. Nasuhova djela su od velike važnosti za demonstraciju isprepletenosti nauke, kulture, historije i umjetnosti u osmanskom periodu. Štaviše, njegovi prikazi gradova na rutama vojnih pohoda zauzimaju rano i specifično mjesto u osmanskoj vizuelnoj historiografiji, pružajući istovremeno dragocjene podatke za vojnu logistiku i strateško planiranje. Primarna motivacija ove studije je da pokaže kako Matrakçı Nasuh nije bio samo historičar i umjetnik unutar vojne kulture osmanskog 16. stoljeća, već i značajna figura koja je stvarala djela o tehnikama ratovanja i vojnoj obuci. Shodno tome, studija ima za cilj ispitati Nasuhovu ulogu unutar osmanskog vojnog sistema i naglašava potrebu za evaluacijom metoda koje je razvio u obuci oružjem i fizičkom vaspitanju kao integralnih komponenti disciplinovane vojne obuke u osmanskoj vojsci. Igra *matrak*, koju je Nasuh razvio i koja nosi njegovo ime, korištena je kao metoda obuke dizajnirana da poboljša reflekse vojnika, fizičku izdržljivost, agilnost i vještine bliske borbe.

Nadalje, Nasuhovi traktati o upotrebi oružja i trenažnim praksama ističu važnost disciplinovanog i sistematičnog vojnog obrazovanja koje je usvojila osmanska vojska. Ličnim učešćem u pohodima i dokumentovanjem osvajačkih ruta i vojnih stanica putem detaljnih vizuelnih prikaza, Nasuh je dao značajan doprinos razumijevanju logističkih struktura i geografskih dimenzija vojnih operacija. Predstavljajući pristup koji daje prioritet praktičnoj obuci unutar osmanske vojne misli, Matrakçı Nasuh se stoga smatra jednim od najoriginalnijih intelektualaca svog vremena zbog integracije teoretskih i praktičnih dimenzija osmanskog vojnog razmišljanja.

**Ključne riječi:** Novi mediji i komunikacija, *Matrak*, Matrakçı Nasuh, *Tuhfetül Guzat*.

## Introduction

From cartographic and urban depictions (cartography/topography) to miniature and illumination, calligraphy (fine writing) to mathematics, authorship and production in the fields of history and geography, as well as martial arts training and instruction, Matrakçı Nasuh is recognized for his achievements in diverse disciplines and for works entrusted to future generations, testifying to his importance as a historical figure whose skills and knowledge deserve ongoing study and scholarly inquiry. His mastery of multiple disciplines rendered Nasuh an influential figure whose contributions to various domains remain significant for contemporary advancements. This study examines Matrak Nasuh against the background of the „matrak” game—a martial and sporting discipline that constitutes a synthesis of art, sport, and military pedagogy.

Nasuh, known as Matrakçı due to his remarkable accomplishments and skills displayed in the cudgel-based sport „matrak”, has produced numerous invaluable works that merit modern examination. During military campaigns ordered by Ottoman sultans, he meticulously painted miniatures of cities and locales witnessed in person, documenting urban plans and thereby providing substantial documentary evidence concerning the political and architectural conditions of the era. Through his systematization of city plans and military campaign routes in miniature form, Nasuh significantly advanced the discipline of urban history; his works now serve as primary sources for a range of scholarly disciplines, including urban history, miniature art, architecture, cartography, and topography.

In addition to his artistic and documentary pursuits, Nasuh excelled in mathematics, history, weaponry training (Silahtar-Nasuh el-Silâhî), miniature art, competitive martial arts, swordsmanship, scholarship, philosophy, statesmanship, navigation, painting, farming, invention, calligraphy, and geography. Exceeding his contemporaries in intellectual breadth, he authored foundational mathematical treatises such as Cemâlû'l Küttâb, Kemâlû'l Hisâb, and Umdetü'l Hisâb, further establishing his reputation as a distinguished mathematician. His fame in connection with the matrak game originates from the strategic brilliance and success he demonstrated as a master swordsman; his legacy is one of multifaceted achievement, integrating the skills of a military instructor, swordsman, and athlete while elevating the matrak game as a discipline embodying both sport and the art of war.

Through his unique miniatures, Nasuh enables modern societies to envision the social and cultural contours of the sixteenth century; the matrix game itself, evocative of modern Olympic sword sports such as fencing and kendo, stands as an inspiration for subsequent martial disciplines. Matrak, an essential training method in military education and combat practice, was standardized by Nasuh and has become synonymous with his name. His strategic and original perspectives on martial drills have been decisive in gaining recognition under the epithets „silahi” (weapons master) and „silahşor”

(swordsman); in his era, Nasuh was celebrated not only for his success in combat demonstrations and competitions, but also for his leadership in military planning and preparedness.

The concept of the „silahi” (weapons master) is epitomized by Nasuh, whose martial arts and training activities were integrally linked to the development of matrak as a sport. His creative process in simulating sword and shield techniques using wooden cudgels as training implements demonstrates his ingenuity as an artist and innovator. In practice, matrak contributed to the advancement of swordsmanship among soldiers and athletes; it fostered reflex development and furthered both offensive and defensive strategic thinking, while its strict regimen ensured players maintained optimal condition and balance. In the context of close-quarters combat, the matrak game advanced war skills and enabled participants to preserve their physical and tactical readiness.

The popularization of matrak in social events and entertainment enhanced public appreciation and sympathy for the discipline. Although Nasuh refrained from providing personal biographies, it is documented that he participated in matrak demonstrations and weaponry shows during official festivities under the patronage of Ottoman sultans. Such events served both recreational and military purposes, exemplifying skill and competence. Notably, Nasuh participated in matrak competitions with Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, earning distinctions and, in 1530, being honored by the sultan with an imperial diploma for his martial prowess. His unmatched abilities in matrak are further evidenced by his literary contributions, such as *Tuhfetül Guzat*, which explores themes of warfare and strategy, as well as techniques in swordsmanship, shield, mace, cavalry, and archery.

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Nasuh's *Tuhfetül Guzat*, enriched by his personal sketches and artistic renderings, emphasizes the value of formal drill and discipline, while also showcasing his proficiency in cartography and military strategy. This treatise demonstrates that warfare consists not only of tactical operations but also requires mastery in logistics, geographic analysis, route planning, personnel deployment, and supply management. The text, therefore, remains vital for understanding Ottoman military systems and their relationship to urban

development, infrastructure, and aesthetic expression. Matrakçı Nasuh's wide-ranging legacy as an innovator, chronicler, and practitioner has bequeathed a wealth of source material to modern researchers. It stands to reason that renewed scholarly engagement, supported by academic inquiry, is essential to further illuminate the skills and talents possessed by this crucial figure in Ottoman and Turkish history.

### **A Study on the Life of Bosnian Scholar Matrakçı Nasuh**

Nasuh bin Karagöz bin Abdullah al-Silâhî al-Matrâkî al-Visokavî al-Bosnavî (Matrakçı Nasuh Visočak), renowned for his multifaceted talents and achievements in mathematics, history, weaponry (Silahtar-Nasuh el-Silâhî), miniature art, martial sports, swordsmanship, scholarship, philosophy, statesmanship, maritime affairs, painting, agriculture, cartography, invention, calligraphy, and geography, was a prominent figure who marked the 16th century. Although his exact date of birth is not recorded, it is widely accepted that he lived between 1480 and 1564 [16 Ramadan 971 (April 28, 1564)]. A polymath who inscribed his name in the golden pages of Ottoman history, Nasuh was one of the notable personalities that the Balkan region contributed to the Ottoman Empire. Born in the town of Visoko in Bosnia, he was the grandson of Karagöz, who had entered imperial service through the Ottoman devshirme system. Nasuh served in the Janissary corps, and upon the discovery of his exceptional abilities, he became one of the instructors at the Enderun School, gaining the rare opportunity to serve the sultans of his era.

A fluent speaker of five languages, Matrakçı earned distinction through his works on history, calligraphy, painting, mathematics, and military science, establishing himself as one of the most significant intellectuals of the Ottoman 16th century. The epithet „Matrakçı” was bestowed upon him for his invention and mastery of the Matrak (Mel'abe-i Matrak), a form of mock combat or martial game. He participated in military campaigns with the sultans, illustrated the regions he traveled through, and created visual records that guided the artistic sensibilities of later generations, serving as an enduring source of inspiration. Living during the reigns of Sultan Selim I (Yavuz Sultan Selim) and Sultan Süleyman I (Kanuni Sultan Süleyman), Matrakçı Nasuh is regarded as a genius who broke new ground in the arts and documented historical details that illuminate his period.

Through his topographical painting style and his depictions of cities devoid of human figures, his works serve as visual records of the Ottoman era, portraying the social, cultural, geographical, aesthetic, architectural, and military structure of the time. With his exceptional skill, unique style, and penetrating intellect, Nasuh transcended his contemporaries. His distinct use of color and line in miniature paintings established a personal style that set him apart in Ottoman art history. Indeed, Matrakçı Nasuh is recognized as one of the most influential

painters depicting Ottoman military campaigns, with his topographical illustrations—fortresses, ports, vegetation, and cityscapes—reflecting his own observations and contributing significantly to the development of a more realistic approach in Turkish miniature art<sup>1</sup>.

Yet it must be noted that his perception of reality diverged from that of Western painting traditions incorporating perspective and three-dimensionality. During his participation in various campaigns, he painted and took notes on the cities, ports, and fortresses he observed. Entering the Enderun School under Sultan Bayezid II, Nasuh later presented to Sultan Selim I his mathematical treatises *Cemalu'l-Küttâb ve Kemalu'l-Hisab* and *Ûdetu'l-Hisab*<sup>2</sup>, works addressing the fundamental operations of arithmetic, fractions, numbers, and scales. In 1533, he expanded these studies into another major work, *Umdetu'l-Hisab*<sup>3</sup>.

Nasuh also traveled to Egypt, where he participated in competitions with the most renowned swordsmen of the time. His exceptional performances in combat games, particularly through the innovative techniques he introduced into the Matrak discipline, established him as one of the greatest duelists of the Ottoman period, earning him the epithet „Matrakçı Nasuh” and the formal title of *Silahtar* (master swordsman). His unrivaled prowess was officially confirmed by a diploma conferred by Sultan Süleyman in 1530. Upon his return from Egypt, he documented his tactical and strategic innovations in combat arts, producing a work that contributed to the literature of martial sciences.

Considering the intellectual and artistic context of his time, Nasuh's versatility, analytical insight, and keen observation distinguished him among his contemporaries, positioning him as a pioneer whose ideas and works enriched various branches of art and military science. His topographically descriptive works, serving both artistic and documentary functions, introduced fresh perspectives and methodologies into Ottoman visual culture. Highlighting his acute observational skills, Nasuh's schematic and topographic compositions, including his depictions of places he visited—roads, bridges, fortifications, vegetation, and architectural structures—brought exceptional innovation to the art of miniature painting, earning him an enduring place in the artistic heritage of the Ottoman Empire.

Matrakçı Nasuh prepared significant works on mathematics and geometry, namely *Cemâlû'l-Küttâb* and *Umdetü'l-Hisâb*, which he dedicated to Sultan Selim I (Yavuz Sultan Selim). In the extant copy preserved in Zagreb, the capital of modern-day Croatia, his name is recorded as Nasûh b. Karagöz el-

<sup>1</sup> Çağman, F, Tanındı, Z. Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi İslam Minyatürleri, *Sanat ve Kültür Yayınları 1*, Güzel Sanatlar Matbaası A.Ş., İstanbul 1979, 53-64.

<sup>2</sup> Yurdaydın H. G., *Nasûh's Silâhî (Matrakçı), Beyân-ı Menâzil-i Sefer-i Irâkeyn-i Sultân Süleymân Hân*, TTK, Ankara 2014, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Erkan Davut, Matrakçı Nasûh'un Hayatı ve Eserleri Üzerine Notlar, *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, Sayı: 37, 2011, 60.

Priştëvi<sup>4</sup>. Due to this identification, debates have arisen regarding his possible origin from Priştina. However, following a detailed examination of existing sources, the evidence suggests that „Matrakçı Nasuh’s grandfather was brought from Sarajevo through the devşirme system, his father’s name was Abdullah, and he himself was known as Nasuh bin Abdullah”<sup>5</sup>.

Although little is known about the early stages of his life, research indicates that he was born in Sarajevo. The exact date of his arrival in Istanbul remains uncertain, yet findings show that he resided in the city for many years. Living during the peak of the Ottoman Empire’s rise—an era characterized by esteem for scholarship and the arts, when eminent works flourished—Matrakçı Nasuh distinguished himself as a remarkable figure. Information concerning his family is limited. His work Süleymannâme mentions that he had a son, though nothing is known of any other children. While precise data on his final years are unavailable, it is known that his last work was completed by 1561<sup>6</sup>.

Seybold, referring to a Qur’anic commentary found in Breslau City Library, noted that the copyist identified himself as Hüseyin b. Nasûh el-Visokovî; based on this, he proposed that the individual might have been Matrakçı Nasuh’s son. He further asserted that Visoko is a town in Bosnia and Herzegovina and, according to this record, Nasuh may have originated from that region<sup>7</sup>.

The fact that Matrakçı Nasuh referred to himself using different appellations in his own works complicates efforts to trace his lineage accurately, rendering extant information ambiguous. In Cemâlî’l-Küttâb ve Kemâlî’l-Hüssâb, for example, he identified himself as Nasûh b. Abdullah on folio 1b and as Nasûh b. Karagöz el-Priştëvi on folio 2a<sup>8</sup>; in Umdu’l-Hisâb<sup>9</sup>, he again used Nasûh b. Abdullah. In the copy of Tuhfetü’l-Guzât<sup>10</sup> preserved in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, his name appears as Hüsrevü’s-Silahî el-müştehir bi-ser-silahşorân. Studies also confirm that he frequently referred to himself as Nasûhu’s-Silahî eş-şehir bi-Matrâkî. Kâtip Çelebi, in his Keşfu’z-Zünûn, recorded his name as Nasûh b. Karagöz b. Abdullah<sup>11</sup> and identified the

<sup>4</sup> Erkan Davut, *Matrakçı Nasuh’un Süleyman-namesi (1520-1537)*, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Marmara Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, 2015, 20.

<sup>5</sup> Selvi Hüseyin Zahit ve Bekiroğlu Keskin, Gaye (2017), Matrakçı Nasuh’un Galata Ve İstanbul Minyatürlerinin Harita Tekniği Açısından İncelenmesi, *İstem*, Yıl: 15, Sayı: 29. 25-29.

<sup>6</sup> Atasoy Nurhan, Silahşör, Tarihçi, Matematikçi, Nakkaş, *Hattatmatrakçı Nasuh Ve Menazilname’si: Beyan-ı Menazil-İ Sefer-İ İrakeyn-İ Sultan Süleyman Han*, 1. Cilt, Milenyum Yayıncılık, İstanbul 2015, 14-15.

<sup>7</sup> Erkan D., *Matrakçı Nasuh’un Süleymân-nâmesi (1520-1537)*, Marmara Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Türk Tarihi Ana Bilim Dalı Yeniçağ Tarihi Bilim Dalı, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, İstanbul 2005, 17.

<sup>8</sup> İstanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi, TY, Nr. 2719, Vr. 1b.

<sup>9</sup> Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Esad Efendi Kol, Nr. 3152, Vr. 1b.

<sup>10</sup> Macar Bilimler Akademisi Kütüphanesi, Török Nr. O. 128, Vr. 2a.

<sup>11</sup> Kâtip Çelebi, *Keşfü’z-zünûn an esâmi’l-kütüb ve’l-fünûn*, İstanbul 1941, c. I, 594.

author of *Tuhfetü'l-Guzât*, attributed to Nasuh, as *Hüsrevü's-Silahî el-ma'rûf bi-reisi'l-silahşorân*<sup>12</sup>

### Matrakçı Nasuh's Skills in the Art of Warfare

Although he is often regarded as the inventor of the matrak game, Nasuh—known by the epithet Matrakçı for his innovations in tactics and strategies within the existing game—was recognized as a polymath of his era, distinguished for his expertise in military strategy, swordsmanship, and the matrak sport. Recorded in history as a versatile, talented, and exceptionally skilled Bosnian intellectual, Nasuh was educated at the Enderun Mektebi (Palace School) during the reign of Sultan Bayezid II. There, he received training from some of the most knowledgeable and accomplished scholars and masters of the time. Among them, Sai Çelebi—one of Bayezid II's tutors—formed with him a strong bond that transcended the traditional master-apprentice relationship. In later years, Nasuh himself taught at the Enderun Mektebi, thereby transmitting his extensive knowledge and refined skills to subsequent generations.

Matrakçı Nasuh occupies a distinct place among the rare individuals who combined in one person the attributes of a scholar, artist, soldier, athlete, educator, philosopher, statesman, seafarer, farmer, and inventor. His multidimensional intellect, creative approach, and the distinctiveness of his works set him apart from his contemporaries when measured against the context and constraints of his time. For the Bosnian Matrakçı, the most significant duty was to produce enduring works worthy of being considered „history“—creations from which future generations could learn and find moral instruction<sup>13</sup>.

Continuously seeking self-improvement and possessing a keenly observant mind, Nasuh of Visoko mastered the ability to highlight his analytical insight. In his works, he went beyond a singular interpretive stance, integrating artistic expression to portray from his unique perspective the societal, political, cultural, geographic, and military developments of his era and region. As a witness to some of the most crucial events and transformations of his time, Matrakçı Nasuh created works that have endured as vital documentary evidence. Undoubtedly, the body of work he left to future generations serves as an invaluable resource for understanding the past in the context of contemporary societies.

In 1517, Nasuh al-Bosnawi prepared a series of works in the field of mathematics to be presented to Sultan Selim I. The sophistication and intellectual quality of these works attracted considerable attention, and through his numerous other compositions—depicting, with striking realism, various elements ranging from human settlements and vegetation cover to natural environments and

<sup>12</sup> Kâtip Çelebi, *Keşfü'z-zünûn an esâmi'l-küttüb ve'l-fünûn*, İstanbul, 1941, c. I, 371.

<sup>13</sup> Yurdaydın H. G, *Matrakçı Nasûh*, Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1963, XII.

architecturally significant structures—he succeeded in drawing the appreciation and patronage of the Ottoman sultans of his time. The Bosnian calligrapher and miniature painter Nasuh, known for his mastery as both a calligrapher and an illuminator, demonstrated in his original and highly refined miniatures, which incorporate map-like visual components, as well as in the written sections accompanying these artistic depictions, that he was far more than merely an accomplished miniature artist. His manner of integrating image and text reveals that he was also a historian who sought to chronicle historical events not solely through written expression but also through carefully rendered visual documentation<sup>14</sup>

After traveling to Egypt, Nasuh al-Bosnawi participated in public demonstrations alongside eminent and renowned swordsmen. His exceptional achievements in swordsmanship and in the popular combat game matrak earned him the reputation of being the most distinguished warrior in the Ottoman domains—thereafter he became widely known as Matrakçı Nasuh. Upon his return from Egypt, he composed a treatise on the art of swordsmanship<sup>15</sup>. It is also asserted that he took part in the Iraqeyn Campaign of 1533 against the Safavid Empire, as he authored a work that includes miniatures depicting this military expedition, and certain expressions within the text strongly imply his direct participation<sup>16</sup>. Under the orders of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, Nasuh undertook the Turkish translation of the celebrated Arabic Chronicle of Islam by Muhammad b. Jarir al-Tabari. Furthermore, in the year 936 AH (1530 CE), he produced his distinguished work entitled Tuhfetü'l-Guzat, in which he conveyed his extensive expertise, technical skill, and accumulated strategic knowledge regarding the art and discipline of swordsmanship.

In 1529, during the grand circumcision ceremony organized in honor of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent's three sons—Şehzades Mustafa, Mehmed, and Selim—splendid festivities took place at the Atmeydanı (Hippodrome) in Sultanahmet. Among these entertainments, two mobile fortresses constructed out of paper were built, complete with cannons, battering instruments, and all the necessary materials for siege warfare. Within these model fortifications, soldiers performed a mock battle, vividly imitating scenes of real warfare<sup>17</sup>. Through these two fortress structures, Matrakçı Nasuh demonstrated not only his artistic ingenuity but also his remarkable proficiency in engineering design.

The two movable and wheeled fortresses, created as part of the performance staged for the circumcision celebrations of the Sultan's sons, stood as original works of engineering, each featuring four gates and five towers.

<sup>14</sup> Kumcu İlal S, *Beyan-ı Menazil-i Sefer-i Irakeyn-i Sultan Süleyman Han Minyatürlerinin Doğa Ve Bitki Örtüsünün İncelenmesi*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Sanat Tarihi Anabilim Dalı, Doktora Tezi, İstanbul 1995, 2.

<sup>15</sup> Tanındı Z, *Türk Minyatür Sanatı*, Türkiye İş Bankası Yayını, İstanbul 1996, 3-62.

<sup>16</sup> Erkan Davut, Matrakçı Nasûh'un Hayatı ve Eserleri Üzerine Notlar, *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, Sayı: 37, 2011, 184.

<sup>17</sup> Yurdaydın H. G, *Matrakçı Nasûh*, TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, 28, İstanbul 2003, 144.

Moreover, the fact that the walls of these fortresses were ornamented with intricate decorations reveals the intersection of Nasuh's technical knowledge and his aesthetic sensibility. In constructing these fortresses, he also fitted them with cannons and rifles, and placed swordsmen within each stronghold. When the two fortresses were finally completed, their gates were opened, and the soldiers stationed inside emerged to engage in mock combat in the arena. Eventually, one fortress overpowered the other, marking the dramatic conclusion of the spectacle.

This impressive performance, masterminded by Nasuh, became known as the „Game of Two Castles.” The purpose of the game was to reenact the scene of a siege. Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, observing the spectacle from his throne set up in front of İbrahim Pasha Palace at the Atmeydanı, was as captivated by Nasuh's extraordinary performance as the rest of the audience. At the conclusion of the event, the Sultan issued an imperial decree appointing him as the chief master swordsman of the entire Ottoman Empire. Following this historic demonstration, Nasuh's name was forever inscribed in history as „the lion of the forest of courage—Mitrakçı Nasuh”<sup>18</sup>. The Two Castle Game of Nasuh of Visoko is also featured in his treatise Tuhfe el-Guzât.

Beyond his multifaceted talents and extraordinary abilities, when assessed within the context of the period in which he lived, it is fair to assert that Matrakçı Nasuh possessed an intellect and foresight far ahead of his contemporaries. In addition to the unique works he contributed to the scientific and artistic corpus of his era, the matrak game—through which he acquired his epithet—and his remarkable mastery in designing strategic games contributed significantly to his rapid rise to prominence. Participating in swordsmanship demonstrations organized in Egypt under the command of Hayr Bey, who had been appointed governor by Sultan Selim I, Bosnian-born Nasuh earned the deep admiration of Hayr Bey for his exceptional performance and skill in weaponry.

So impressed was Hayr Bey by Nasuh's swordsmanship that, when Nasuh prepared to return to Istanbul, Hayr Bey composed a letter to accompany him—a letter expressing his admiration and high praise for Nasuh's mastery of arms. The records further indicate that Nasuh, who surpassed his peers in the art of matrak (Celalzade, vr. 197b), was officially recognized as invincible in the field of swordsmanship through a decree (berat) issued by Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent in the year 936 AH (1530 CE), thereby affirming his superiority<sup>19</sup>. In this imperial decree, which declared Nasuh the „chief of swordsmen,” Sultan Suleiman ordered that Nasuh, who had demonstrated exceptional excellence over all rivals in various forms of spear and weapon combat, be recognized throughout the Ottoman lands as both „Ustad” (Master) and „Reis” (Head) in these disciplines<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> Erkan Davut, 16. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Tarihçiliğinde Yeni Bir Soluk: Matrakçı Nasuh, *1453 İstanbul Kültür ve Sanat Dergisi*, İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür A.Ş. Yayınları, Sayı: 19, 2014, 41.

<sup>19</sup> Yurdaydın H. G, *Mitrakçı Nasûh*, TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, 28, İstanbul 2003, 143.

<sup>20</sup> Yurdaydın H. G, *Mitrakçı Nasûh*, Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Yayınları. 1963, XI.

In that same year, 936 AH (1530 CE)—when the circumcision festivities for Sultan Suleiman’s sons (şehzades) took place—Nasuh completed his treatise *Tuhfetü’l-Guzat*, a comprehensive work devoted to the art of warfare. In this text, Nasuh-i Silahî addressed a wide range of martial subjects, including archery, swordsmanship, shield defense, mace handling, and cavalry training, thereby solidifying his stature as both a theoretician and a practitioner in military sciences.

### **The Matrak Game and the Influence of the Swordsman Matrakçı Nasuh on Turkish Military Art**

Although the matrak game is often attributed to Matrakçı Nasuh (Nasuh bin Karagöz al-Bosnevî) as its inventor in the 16th century, various earlier sources indicate that similar forms of the game existed prior to his time. Nonetheless, Matrakçı Nasuh is recognized as the figure who developed and systematized it, transforming it into a structured practice with educational and training objectives. Beyond being a type of game, when evaluated within the conditions of its time, matrak came to be regarded as a form of sport. Furthermore, in the modern era—considered the contemporary continuation of Turkish traditional practices—it has been revived and included within the scope of traditional sports disciplines.

From an etymological perspective, the term matrak derives from the Arabic root *tark*, which was adopted into Turkish with the meanings of „stick” or „club.” Accordingly, it is reasonable to claim that the stick or club used in the game not only served as its main instrument but also lent its name to the sport itself. During the Ottoman Empire, matrak was practiced particularly during festivals and celebrations, as well as within the imperial court and the Janissary corps, where it functioned as a form of competition. While it may be described variously as a race, a sport, a game, or a training exercise, matrak was both an entertainment activity with social dimensions and a form of military drill aimed at enhancing combat readiness.

As a martial society, the Ottomans valued close-combat skills, and the matrak sport was therefore played primarily in open fields and public squares as a means of developing such techniques. During the later Ottoman periods, this vigorous sport was practiced by strong players known as *matrakçıs*, and the contests—called *matrak bazlık*—involved combat using matrak clubs, which were short, soft-tipped batons. Similar to other traditional athletic events such as *cirit* (equestrian javelin-throwing) or wrestling, the game was accompanied by the beat of drums and the shrill sound of the *zurna* (a reed instrument).<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Matrak Oyunu, *Türk Halk Oyunları Kataloğu T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı*, e-kitap, <https://ekitap.ktb.gov.tr/TR-79507/matrak-oyunu>.

However, unlike certain folk games such as *sinsin*, *matrak* contained virtually no element of dance or rhythmic movement.

Matrakçı Nasuh, the individual credited with institutionalizing and formalizing the rules of the *matrak* game, also excelled as a swordsman and promoted it as a defensive sport that fostered both physical and mental development within the military context of the time. The game required two essential pieces of equipment: the *matrak* stick—a polished club made from boxwood with a soft protective cover at the end—and a soft cushion or shield held in the left hand, serving as protective gear. Players, known as *matrakçis*, also wore helmets or padded headgear to protect against blows.

The primary objective of the *matrak* match was to strike the opponent's head or guarded area using controlled, touch-like movements. Scoring was based on the precision of each strike: a hit to the head earned 3 points, the torso 2 points, and contact with the arms or legs 1 point. Matches were supervised by a referee who enforced established rules regarding duration, equipment specifications, and scoring. Within this regulated framework, *matrak* functioned as more than a mere entertainment game—it cultivated balance, speed, technical control, and discipline, qualifying it as a unique hybrid between sport and military exercise in the Ottoman martial tradition.

The *matrak* sport, in which harsh strikes and injury-intended actions were subject to penalties, embodied an ethos grounded in fairness, self-defense, tactical awareness, and respect for the opponent. Beyond these moral imperatives, it also cultivated proficiency in close-combat techniques, tactical innovation, improved speed, precision, and decisive offensive ability in the martial arts context. As a form of military exercise, the *matrak* war game was designed not to inflict fatal or violent blows but rather to train participants to anticipate their opponent's movements, develop rapid reflexes, increase agility, and maintain balanced control between attack and defense.

Focusing on agility, coordination, defense, and offensive skills, *matrak* functioned as a defensive sport aimed at enhancing combat and survival capabilities. Over time, this training-oriented practice evolved into a structured game format, gaining popularity across all layers of Ottoman society and becoming an enduring social and martial tradition. It is therefore appropriate to note that *matrak* possessed ritual, social, and ethical dimensions that emphasized courtesy, discipline, and sportsmanship. As a form of close-combat exercise deeply rooted in Turkish culture and Ottoman military tradition, *matrak* served both as a training tool for soldiers and as a recreational activity that strengthened communal bonds.

Throughout Ottoman history, particularly within the *sipahi* cavalry and the Janissary corps, *matrak* was widely employed as an instructional method to enhance martial aptitude. During the sixteenth century, this sport was used to refine the fighting styles, techniques, and tactical competence of the Janissaries

and to improve their swordsmanship<sup>22</sup>. The noted Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi provides further evidence of the game's prominence, recording in his *Seyahatname* that there were ten workshops in Istanbul dedicated to matrak players (matrakçısı), employing around thirty craftsmen responsible for producing game equipment and weapons<sup>23</sup>. The existence of these specialized workshops, as documented by Evliya Çelebi, clearly demonstrates that the matrak game had already achieved a high level of organization and refinement centuries before the emergence of modern Olympic fencing and other sword-based sports, functioning as a formalized martial training practice within the Ottoman Empire.

Considering the historical record of traditional Turkish sports—which included wrestling, swordplay, archery, horsemanship, polo (çöğen), cirit (mounted javelin throwing), spear-fighting, gökbörü (a game resembling polo with a goat carcass), stick-fighting (cop), tepük (a precursor of football), running (seyirtmek), hunting, skiing, boxing, bayonet fighting, swimming, matrak, club combat (tomak), stone throwing, tuluk (a competitive bag game), weightlifting, and pole climbing—it becomes evident that matrak predates many of the sports regarded as modern today, including fencing and kendo. In light of its tactical, strategic, and rule-based system, matrak may thus be characterized not only as a martial art but also as a form of simulated combat—one that integrates discipline, intellect, and controlled technique into the practice of warfare.

The matrak game, characterized by its emphasis on courtesy and sportsmanship, represents a distinctly Turkish martial sport that was embraced by the public as early as the 1500s. It was a regulated discipline with established rules, clearly defined principles, and protective equipment that ensured safety during play. Over time, its dynamic movements and codified structure served as a source of inspiration for the evolution of other athletic practices. According to the travel accounts of Evliya Çelebi, the art of matrakbazlık—the performance of matrak maneuvers—comprised more than 160 distinct forms of movement. It is further recorded that Sultan Murad IV himself was proficient in nearly seventy of these forms, highlighting both the sport's complexity and its cultural integration within Ottoman society<sup>24</sup>.

Indeed, matrak occupies a significant place within the Turkish tradition of sport, combining martial training with elements of recreation, thereby transforming warfare techniques into a structured and socially valued game. It stands as a discipline designed to promote both the technical and physical development of its players. Today, matrak is officially represented within the Turkish Federation of Traditional Sports Branches, continuing to transmit principles of respect toward one's opponent, acknowledgment of personal

<sup>22</sup> Yıldız Doğan, *Türk Spor Tarihi*, Ser Yayıncılık, İstanbul 1979, 11-12.

<sup>23</sup> [https://ectal.meb.k12.tr/icerikler/geleneksel-turk-sporlari-matrak\\_11652373](https://ectal.meb.k12.tr/icerikler/geleneksel-turk-sporlari-matrak_11652373).

<sup>24</sup> Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi Cilt 1*. (R. Dankoff ve S. A. Kahraman, Çev.). Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul 2006.

mistakes, and cultivation of ethical awareness—values that collectively form the moral foundation of sporting culture.

Through the organization of tournaments and demonstrations by various clubs and federations, matrak continues to survive as a living tradition that embodies both the preservation of cultural heritage and the promotion of national identity. As Evliya Çelebi records, the sport included diverse varieties such as fenn-i kesme, bağla, tanı, haddâd, bağal, muhalif, sürme ve gazel, kulak, serre, zîr ve heva, bağla top, rehâ top, fîdye, cângûş, top kafâ, and hevâkes, each emphasizing distinct technical motions and tactical patterns<sup>25</sup>. These movements contributed to players' development of coordination, defensive skills, physical strength, agility, and quick responsiveness—all of which were integral to martial readiness.

Evliya Çelebi also recounts that Sultan Murad IV was an accomplished matrak player who could anticipate an opponent's technique, identify every vulnerability, and strike skillfully upon the head in a manner that produced the characteristic „matrak-trak” sound—a vivid expression of both control and artistry. His *Seyahatname* thus offers invaluable ethnographic insights into the cultural context, material conditions, and performative aspects surrounding matrak during the Ottoman period. Furthermore, Çelebi noted that the matrak club, shaped similarly to a mace (lobut), was relatively heavy, requiring practitioners to possess strong arm muscles—demonstrating that the game simultaneously stimulated mental focus and physical strength.

While preserving its traditional values, the development of matrak in accordance with modern sporting standards would allow it to attract the interest of younger generations. As a cultural and historical legacy central to the Turkish martial tradition, matrak embodies the imperative of safeguarding historical heritage while nurturing national memory—ensuring the transmission of historical consciousness to future generations as a vital cultural and ethical responsibility.

## Summary

The preservation of cultural heritage and the transmission of values acquired throughout history to future generations within the framework of historical consciousness bear great significance for humanity. Communities composed of individuals who lack historical understanding and cultural awareness are inevitably bound to experience identity loss and increased susceptibility to external influence. Societies continually regulated by external actors eventually adopt lifestyles defined by standards and expectations not of their own making.

<sup>25</sup> Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi Cilt 1*. (R. Dankoff ve S. A. Kahraman, Çev). Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul 2006.

Within the panorama of Turkish history and cultural heritage, the sport of matrak occupies a remarkable position and contributes to the broader development of world sports history (Nasuh, 1530). Although the precise inception or invention date remains unrecorded, matrak is estimated to have originated in the early 1500s or the 16th century. Scholarly consensus acknowledges that Matrakçı Nasuh systematized the sport and popularized it for the advancement of military training (Nasuh, 1530; Seyahatname). Specifically, during the 16th century, Nasuh formalized the rules and standards of matrak. The sport, while played alongside other disciplines within the Ottoman Empire, became more prominent due to its military character and persists today.

Matrak's emphasis on physical abilities—such as technical control, speed, and balance—alongside cognitive skills like tactical reasoning and strategic thinking, as well as ethical values including respect for opponents and sportsmanship, establishes it as a key element of the Turkish intangible cultural heritage necessitating continued preservation (Evliya Çelebi, Seyahatname). Its documentation in written works, ranging from Evliya Çelebi's travelogue to subsequent folklore studies, has cemented matrak's classification among traditional sports undergirding modern athletic traditions.

Given its historical depth, distinctive aspects, and multidimensional benefits, matrak justifiably deserves increased scholarly attention and visibility. Matrakçı Nasuh provided detailed exposition of the sport in his treatise *Tuhfetü'l Guzât* (The Gift to the Warriors), published in 1530, encompassing subjects such as archery, swordsmanship, the use of shields and maces, horsemanship, and weapon proficiency (Nasuh, 1530). Evaluated within its historical context, *Tuhfetü'l Guzât* stands as the first and sole source addressing this topic until its publication year.

The treatise, produced in the same year as the circumcision ceremonies of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent's sons, carries importance for its technical and martial terminology and its visual depictions—illustrated through maps and miniatures that attest to Nasuh's artistic expertise. Enhanced by a meticulously structured layout complemented by miniatures, the work distinguishes itself by integrating military history and art. By encompassing both tactical instruction and celebratory performance, *Tuhfetü'l Guzât* is widely regarded as a primary source for understanding the institutionalized tradition of swordsmanship and the prominence of martial training in Ottoman society.

Significantly, the manuscript brings together the extraordinary skills and accomplishments of Nasuh bin Karagöz bin Abdullah al-Silâhî al-Matrâkî al-Visokavî al-Bosnavî (Matrakçı Nasuh Visočak), a pivotal figure of the 16th century who excelled in mathematics, history, weaponry, miniature art, martial sports, swordsmanship, scholarship, philosophy, statesmanship, seamanship, painting, agriculture, cartography, invention, calligraphy, and geography (Nasuh, 1530). Thus, *Tuhfetü'l Guzât* serves as an enduring testament to his intellectual legacy.

Presently, three extant copies of *Tuhfetü'l Guzât* are preserved in notable archives: Süleymaniye Manuscript Library (*Esad Efendi Collection*, No. 2206), Millet Manuscript Library (*Ali Emirî Collection*, *Askeriyye* No. 219), and the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (*Török Collection*, No. O.128). Its detailed miniature representations of fortresses, military structures, and city walls underscore the significance of urban planning in the Ottoman context, rendering the work an essential reference for studies in architectural and urban history. The meticulous portrayal of city fortifications with distinctive color schemes, observed from multiple angles yet with limited use of perspective, embodies artistic conventions of the era.

Beyond its artistic merit, *Tuhfetü'l Guzât* is a crucial documentation of Ottoman military strategies, ideologies, and methodologies. Moreover, it is valuable in demonstrating that *matrak*, as compared to contemporary sports such as fencing and kendo, possesses a much older and more rooted history (Nasuh, 1530). Consequently, the reintroduction and revitalization of *matrak* among traditional sports are highlighted as central outcomes of this study.

Both in scholarly discourse and practice, *matrak* commands a distinguished place in Turkish sports history as an integral aspect of cultural heritage. Promoting *matrak* to younger generations is essential for fostering historical consciousness. Since its formal recognition in the global sports literature in 2010 as a Turkish sport, *matrak* has been supported by various federations and associations through training programs and international events. The renewed scholarly and cultural interest in Matrakçı Nasuh and *matrak* itself, and the reinforcement of their historical significance within Turkish cultural identity, constitute further notable conclusions of this research.

## Zaključak

Očuvanje kulturne baštine i prenošenje vrijednosti stečenih kroz historiju na buduće generacije, u okviru historijske svijesti, od velikog je značaja za čovječanstvo. Zajednice sačinjene od pojedinaca kojima nedostaje historijsko razumijevanje i kulturna svijest neizbježno su osuđene na gubitak identiteta i povećanu podložnost vanjskim uticajima. Društva kojima stalno upravljaju vanjski akteri na kraju usvajaju stilove života definisane standardima i očekivanjima koja nisu njihova vlastita.

U panorami turske historije i kulturne baštine, sport *matrak* zauzima istaknuto mjesto i doprinosi širem razvoju svjetske sportske historije (Nasuh, 1530). Iako tačan datum nastanka ili izuma nije zabilježen, procjenjuje se da je *matrak* nastao početkom 1500-ih ili u 16. stoljeću. Naučni konsenzus priznaje da je Matrakçı Nasuh sistematizovao ovaj sport i popularizovao ga radi unapređenja vojne obuke (Nasuh, 1530; Seyahatname). Konkretno, tokom 16. stoljeća, Nasuh je formalizovao pravila i standarde *matraka*. Ovaj sport, iako se upražnjavao uz

druge discipline unutar Osmanskog Carstva, postao je istaknutiji zbog svog vojnog karaktera i opstao je do danas.

Naglasak matraka na fizičkim sposobnostima – kao što su tehnička kontrola, brzina i ravnoteža – uz kognitivne vještine poput taktičkog rezonovanja i strateškog razmišljanja, kao i etičke vrijednosti uključujući poštovanje protivnika i sportski duh, pozicionira ga kao ključni element turske nematerijalne kulturne baštine koji zahtijeva trajno očuvanje (Evlija Čelebi, *Seyahatname*). Njegovo dokumentovanje u pisanim djelima, u rasponu od putopisa Evlije Čelebija do kasnijih folklornih studija, učvrstilo je klasifikaciju matraka među tradicionalne sportove koji čine osnovu modernih atletskih tradicija.

S obzirom na njegovu historijsku dubinu, specifične aspekte i višedimenzionalne koristi, matrak opravdano zaslužuje veću naučnu pažnju i vidljivost. Matrakçi Nasuh je detaljno izložio ovaj sport u svom traktatu *Tuhfetü'l Guzât* (Poklon ratnicima), objavljenom 1530. godine, koji obuhvata teme kao što su streličarstvo, mačevanje, upotreba štitova i buzdovana, konjaništvo i vještina rukovanja oružjem (Nasuh, 1530). Ocjenjujući ga u historijskom kontekstu, *Tuhfetü'l Guzât* predstavlja prvi i jedini izvor koji se bavi ovom temom do godine svog objavljivanja.

Traktat, nastao iste godine kada su održane ceremonije sunečenja (obrezivanja) sinova sultana Sulejmana Veličanstvenog, nosi veliku važnost zbog svoje tehničke i borilačke terminologije te vizuelnih prikaza – ilustrovanih mapama i minijaturama koje svjedoče o Nasuhovoj umjetničkoj stručnosti. Obogaćen pedantno strukturiranim rasporedom upotpunjenim minijaturama, rad se izdvaja integracijom vojne historije i umjetnosti. Obuhvatajući i taktičku poduku i svečanu izvedbu, *Tuhfetü'l Guzât* se široko smatra primarnim izvorom za razumijevanje institucionalizovane tradicije mačevanja i značaja borilačke obuke u osmanskome društvu.

Značajno je da ovaj rukopis objedinjuje izvanredne vještine i dostignuća Nasuha bin Karagöza bin Abdullaha al-Silâhîja al-Matrâkîja al-Visokavîja al-Bosnavîja (Matrakçija Nasuh Visočak), ključne figure 16. stoljeća koja se istakla u matematici, historiji, oružju, minijaturnoj umjetnosti, borilačkim sportovima, mačevanju, nauci, filozofiji, državništvu, pomorstvu, slikarstvu, poljoprivredi, kartografiji, inovacijama, kaligrafiji i geografiji (Nasuh, 1530). Tako *Tuhfetü'l Guzât* služi kao trajno svjedočanstvo njegove intelektualne ostavštine.

Danas su tri sačuvana primjerka *Tuhfetü'l Guzât* pohranjena u značajnim arhivima: Biblioteci rukopisa Süleymaniye (*zbirka Esad Efendi, br. 2206*), Biblioteci rukopisa Millet (*zbirka Ali Emîrî, Askeriyye br. 219*) i Biblioteci Mađarske akademije nauka (*Török zbirka, br. O.128*). Njegovi detaljni minijaturni prikazi tvrđava, vojnih objekata i gradskih zidina naglašavaju važnost urbanističkog planiranja u osmanskome kontekstu, čineći ovo djelo nezaobilaznom referencom za studije arhitektonske i urbane historije. Pedantno prikazivanje gradskih utvrda sa specifičnim bojama, posmatrano iz više uglova,

ali uz ograničenu upotrebu perspektive, utjelovljuje umjetničke konvencije tog doba.

Osim umjetničke vrijednosti, Tuhfetü'l Guzât je ključna dokumentacija osmanskih vojnih strategija, ideologija i metodologija. Štaviše, dragocjen je u dokazivanju da matrak, u poređenju sa savremenim sportovima kao što su mačevanje i kendo, posjeduje mnogo stariju i ukorijenjeniju historiju (Nasuh, 1530). Shodno tome, ponovno uvođenje i revitalizacija matraka među tradicionalne sportove istaknuti su kao centralni ishodi ove studije.

Kako u naučnom diskursu, tako i u praksi, matrak zauzima istaknuto mjesto u turskoj sportskoj historiji kao integralni aspekt kulturne baštine. Promovisanje matraka mlađim generacijama od suštinskog je značaja za podsticanje historijske svijesti. Od svog formalnog priznanja u svjetskoj sportskoj literaturi 2010. godine kao turskog sporta, matrak podržavaju različite federacije i udruženja kroz programe obuke i međunarodne događaje. Obnovljeni naučni i kulturni interes za Matrakčija Nasuha i sam matrak, kao i jačanje njihovog historijskog značaja unutar turskog kulturnog identiteta, predstavljaju daljnje značajne zaključke ovog istraživanja.

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