

## A Study On The Handicrafts Featured In The “Surnâme-i Humayun Of Murad III”

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### Abstract

This study aims to examine the Ottoman handicrafts depicted in the miniatures of the *Surnâme-i Hümayun*, which recounts the magnificent circumcision celebration organized by Murad III for Prince Mehmed in 1582. The main objective of the study is to reveal 16th-century Ottoman art production, artisan culture, and relations between court and non-court craftsmen by evaluating the handicraft products depicted in the miniatures in terms of material, technique, motifs, color principles, and composition. Within this framework, examples related to book art, weaving, metalwork, woodwork, ceramic-tile work, and glass art have been examined.

The study employs qualitative, descriptive, and iconographic–iconological analysis methods. The miniatures were first analyzed descriptively, and then interpreted through iconographic methods specific to art history in order to examine symbols, spatial arrangements, and the functions of the depicted scenes. Nurhan Atasoy’s work, *1582 Surnâme-i Hümayun: Celebration Book (The Imperial Surnâme: Wedding Book)*, together with other literature on the handicrafts of the period, formed a comparative framework for the analysis.

The findings reveal that the Surnâme miniatures are not merely a festive narrative, but also provide rich data on Ottoman production technology, artisan organization, and material culture. Details such as the weaving looms, goldsmith and coppersmith tools, glassmakers’ furnace equipment, and carpenters’ tools featured in the guild processions reveal the high level of craftsmanship of the period.

The study reveals that the Surnâme-i Hümayun is a unique source documenting the technical capacity, aesthetic tendencies, and social status of 16th-century Ottoman crafts. In this context, a research output on the

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crafts in the *Surnâme* of Murad III will be presented, detailing the work’s contribution to Ottoman visual culture and art history literature. Thus, the study aims to shed light on both the value of this rare work and the craft universe of the period.

## 1. Introduction

Ottoman Miniature art is an invaluable visual resource that complements written sources in understanding the cultural heritage of the Ottoman period. Miniatures are not only visual documents that depict historical events but also illuminate the social life and lifestyle of the period in which they were created (Aslanapa, 2000). These works of art function as a cultural archive, reflecting the traditions, customs, and practices of the society from which they emerged through a refined artistic style.

Miniatures produced during the Ottoman period generally depict a wide range of subjects, such as palace life, portraits of sultans, ceremonies, literary works, the sultan’s accession to the throne, circumcision ceremonies, receptions of ambassadors, holidays, weddings, celebrations, circumcision ceremonies, receptions of ambassadors, festivals, weddings, celebrations, religious rituals, cityscapes, and scenes of daily life. (And, 2014). In miniatures, the elements within the composition are used decoratively together with the background; floors and walls are adorned with motifs that complement the miniature’s subject matter of the miniature (Tansuğ, 2018). These elements include rugs in some miniatures, curtains in others, and lecterns in still others. The miniatures contain scenes from palace life or the daily lives of ordinary people, along with many examples of the artisanal objects used in these settings (Bağcı et al., 2006).

These paintings offer important clues about a wide variety of handicraft products—from tiles and ceramics to textiles and carpets, from metalwork to woodcarving. Through miniatures, it is possible to partially trace the composition skills, color preferences, motif repertoire, and technical abilities of the masters who worked in the palace workshops of the period.

During the Ottoman period, miniatures frequently appeared in illustrated manuscripts that depicted the sultans’ campaigns, celebrations, and other significant events. One such type of manuscript is the *Surnâme*. The term “*Surnâme*,” combining the Persian words *sûr* (“wedding, celebration”) and *nâme* (“letter, written document”), refers to works in the Ottoman Empire that describe the circumcision, birth, and wedding ceremonies of the sultans’ children. The earliest known examples include the *Surnâme-i Hümayun*, written by Miniatures such as Âlî Mustafa Efendi and İntizâmî for the 1582

celebration. This rare work, a significant historical document, describes the magnificent 52-day circumcision festival of Mehmed, son of Sultan Murad III, held in Istanbul in 1582 (Türkmenoğlu, 2008).

The miniatures illustrating this grand event were prepared by Nakkaş Osman, the most prominent miniaturist of the period, and his team. The work is renowned not so much for its literary text as for its miniatures, which present this visual spectacle. The miniatures depict a vast array of details—parades, acrobatic performances, entertainers, artisan guilds, and palace festivities—with remarkable precision. Owing to these comprehensive miniatures, the *Surnâme-i Hümayun* is not only an account of a celebration but also an invaluable historical document that portrays 16th-century Ottoman social life, clothing, entertainment, and handicrafts (Aynur, 2009).

## 2. Handicrafts Featured in the Surnâme of Sultan Murad III

The handicraft products depicted in miniature art bear traces of a shared aesthetic understanding despite the variety of materials used, such as wood, metal, ceramics, and textil. This common language in composition, color palette, and motif usage points to a consistent artistic taste of the period (Kütükoğlu, 1998). Whether produced for daily use or ceremonial purposes, these works go beyond being mere objects in miniature compositions and function as decorative elements that enrich the space and the scene. For example, in a scene depicting the sultan, the embroidered curtains in the background or the valuable carpets covering the floor reflect the material culture of real life and enhance the narrative by adding depth and grandeur to the composition.

In this context, one of the most valuable sources for understanding 16th-century Ottoman social life and art is the *Surnâme-i Hümayun*, which covers the 1582 circumcision ceremony of Prince Mehmed, the son of Murad III (Özaltın and Ölmez, 2011). This magnificent celebration, which lasted 52 days and 52 nights, is described in the work as if it were a “visual film” (Atasoy, 1997). Commissioned by Murad III to immortalize this state event, this *surnâme* is not merely a record of a ceremony, but also a unique document that conveys the social fabric, wealth, and splendor of the empire’s crafts to future generations. Nurhan Atasoy states the following about the *Surname-i Hümayun: Düğün Kitabı* (The Imperial Surname: Wedding Book):

“Here is Sur, that is, the wedding book ‘Surnâme’, which was created to narrate this most important event in Ottoman history... The fact that the Sultan had his wedding turned into

a separate book so that it would not be forgotten and future generations could read and see it is part of the trend of recording historical events" (Atasoy, 1997).

The *Surnâme-i Hümayun* was created by Nakkas Osman and his team. This manuscript represents the most extensive work produced by Nakkas Osman throughout his artistic career. He served as the chief painter in the Ehl-i Hiref organization for many years (Polat, 2019).

Among the artists organized within the Ehl-i Hiref organization of the palace, painters held a special position, and the acceptance of these distinguished artisans into the palace was carried out with great care (Karaman, 2024). The number of these artist groups and the intensity of their activities were directly related to the interest and patronage of the rulers and statesmen of the period (Atasoy, 1997). In this sense, the reign of Murad III stands out as a period when both artistic production and patronage reached their peak. Indeed, the emergence of the *Surnâme-i Hümayun*, a concrete example of this culture of patronage, is depicted in the final miniature of the work itself.

In this scene, Darüssade Ağa Mehmed Ağa and Zeyrek Ağa, who played a critical role in the preparation of the work, are depicted sitting opposite each other. The author of the work also states that it was completed with the advice and resources provided by these two "intelligent, loyal, and close to the Sultan" individuals. The book held by Mehmed Ağa in the miniature is thought to be the completed copy of the *Surnâme* (Miniature 1) (Atasoy, 1997). This depiction is extremely valuable in that it sheds light on the production process of a palace work and reveals the symbiotic relationship between art, bureaucracy, and palace patronage.

In addition to this production process, the *Surnâme* is also an invaluable source of information about the social fabric of the period in which it was created. Atasoy (1997) expresses this situation in the following lines:

"The organization of the circumcision ceremony; the events held at Atmeydanı and the İbrahim Paşa Palace, where the ceremony took place; the protocol applied to the Sultan, the Prince, statesmen, the harem, foreign state representatives, and the public who attended to watch the ceremony; the materials required for the ceremony and the preparations made to procure them are described in the work and can also be seen in the miniatures. Preparations for the wedding began a year in advance, and the organization was carried out. Plans for the

collaboration to be undertaken were also made. Invitations were then prepared, and envoys were sent to inform the emperors and kings to whom they were addressed that they were invited.” (Atasoy, 1997)

The *Surnâme-i Hümayun* depicts a wide range of Miniatures, from scholars and religious leaders participating in the wedding procession to artisans affiliated with the Istanbul guilds, reflecting the social hierarchy of the period. These descriptions provide an extremely detailed visual inventory of the products that artisans sold or produced specifically, as well as their workplaces, shops, workshops, and the tools they used. Furthermore, the lively and colorful atmosphere of Ottoman entertainment culture is brought to life through the performances of jugglers, acrobats, and other entertainers, as well as the daily banquet tables where the elite mingled with the common people (Fig. 2, 3) (Fetvacı, 2013).

The 52-day, 52-night circumcision celebration of Prince Mehmed in 1582 went down in history not only as a palace event but also as a social festival that brought together people from all classes, tradesmen, and skilled artisans in Istanbul (And, 2000). Since there was no previous example to convey such a comprehensive event, the author and illustrators of the *Surnâme* had to develop a new narrative approach. This need gave rise to the work’s unique structure, which progresses day by day and records every detail. Illuminator Osman and his team depicted the events that took place over the 52 days of the festival in *Atmeydanı*—a historic venue that had been the center of sports, theater, and entertainment since Byzantine times—as scenes following one another like a film reel (Kütükoğlu, 1998).

This original narrative elevates the *Surnâme-i Hümayun* beyond being merely a document, placing it in a special position in the history of Turkish painting. The work has developed a style unique to itself, free from foreign influences, and is considered one of the cornerstones of traditional Turkish painting (Aracı, 2005). The fact that such works were presented as gifts to the sultan of the period is one of the most concrete indicators of the value placed on handicrafts in the 16th-century Ottoman palace. Indeed, the miniatures examined in this study feature striking examples of rich handicrafts that confirm this value. The book serves as a visual catalog reflecting the aesthetic understanding and craftsmanship of the period, with miniatures of wood, glass, ceramic, metal, and textile arts.

## 2.1. The Art of Books

Sultan Murad III commissioned the Surname to be written in order to announce this magnificent celebration to the entire world, marking the circumcision ceremony of his son, Prince Mehmed, with unprecedented splendor. This work, which recounts one of the greatest social events in history, is also a masterpiece of the book arts of the period. Indeed, as Atasoy (1997) notes, the title page of the manuscript contains examples of book art that substantiate this claim (Miniature 1).

When we talk about book arts, the first things that come to mind are disciplines such as binding, calligraphy, illumination, and miniature painting; however, lesser-known professions such as ink making, pen making, pen sharpening, and seal engraving should also be considered within this scope. The existence of a work such as the Surnâme is the joint product of this broad spectrum of book culture and all the artisans who brought it to life. These arts, on the one hand, took shape in magnificent works such as the Surnâme, and on the other hand, maintained their vitality for centuries as an integral part of book culture.

*Mühre Masters (Ottoman Burnishing Specialists):* *Mühre Masters* constituted an indispensable link in the bookmaking process by preparing paper for writing and miniature painting (Cunbur, 1985). In the occupational processions depicted in the *Surnâme-i Hümayûn*, the *mühreciler* also appeared among the guild groups, presenting an open, four-sided carriage adorned with elaborate ornaments; within it sat young men reciting the Qur'an as they proceeded in the parade. The fact that these youths wore headpieces and garments fashioned from meticulously cut paper is particularly noteworthy, as it demonstrates the refinement and precision of the craft (Figure 4). Concrete information regarding the organizational structure of 'mühreci' in the Ottoman period is found in the Istanbul Court Register No. 24 (H. 1138–1151 / A.D. 1726–1738), which contains detailed regulations concerning the "paper-makers and *mühreciler* guild."

## 2.2. Weaving and Textile Art

The central role of fabric in clothing and interior design within Turkish art has deep historical roots. Throughout the long period extending from Central Asia to the Seljuk and Ottoman empires, the art of weaving underwent continuous technical and aesthetic development. The sultans' interest in silk and valuable fabrics in the Ottoman palace led to textile products being seen as a sign of prestige, which directly supported the state's progress in the field of weaving.

From the fifteenth century onwards, Ottoman weaving made a significant breakthrough, producing fabrics of unique design and quality for the palace. The 16th and 17th centuries stand out as a period when Ottoman textile art reached its peak. During this period, technical perfection, rich motif diversity, and color harmony uniquely reflected the artistic value of palace fabrics. This rich motif repertoire also reveals the holistic nature of Ottoman art. Indeed, naturalistic floral motifs such as tulips, carnations, roses, and hyacinths, as well as rumi, çintemani, çarkifelek, crescent, and geometric patterns, which appear in woven works, were also frequently used in ceramics and other decorative arts of the same period. This common language contributed to the strong formation of Ottoman artistic identity by uniting different art forms around the same aesthetic understanding (Berkli et al., 2021). In the *Surnâme-i Hümayun*, fabrics that both reflect the splendor of the palace and form part of everyday life are brought to life through various scenes. The embroidered caftans worn by the sultan and his entourage are indicative of the most valuable fabrics of the period. These caftans feature striking brocades, velvets, and silk fabrics woven with gold and silver threads. The valuable carpets, prayer rugs, and fabric spreads that adorned the festival grounds and covered the floors created an atmosphere reminiscent of a temporary open-air palace.

The work also features a series of professions intertwined with textiles, represented through parades. Peştamal makers displayed peştamals, an indispensable part of bathhouse culture, as well as writing and wrapping fabrics; while printers showcased colorful and patterned fabrics adorned with printing techniques. These miniatures reveal not only the diversity of fabrics but also the place of crafts related to textiles—such as weaving, printing, and embroidery—in social and economic life. In this respect, the *Surnâme* serves as a vivid inventory and visual feast of Ottoman textile art.

**Caftans:** In the miniatures of the *Surnâme-i Hümayun*, textile products appear as an integral part of both daily life and palace protocol. In the work, the kaftans worn by the sultan and princes are one of the most important elements reflecting the splendor of the period's weaving art. These caftans generally feature a collarless, open-fronted design with wide sleeves, and they are notable for their valuable fabrics as well as the appliqué decorations on the hem. For example, the fact that the princes wore a caftan in white, considered a lucky color (Özaltın, 2017), is noteworthy in terms of demonstrating the symbolic meaning of colors.

The kaftan worn by Murad III, depicted in the scene “The Sultan and the Prince Going to the Old Palace,” highlights the aesthetic sensibilities



and richness of patterns of the period. Made of what is likely a velvet fabric embroidered with gold thread, this kaftan is an extremely refined example in terms of both pattern design and weaving craftsmanship (Atasoy, 1997). Furthermore, the “kaftan makers” and “kaftan tailors” among the guilds emphasize their roles in the production and representation of these garments. The scene of kaftan makers carrying kaftans adorned with rumi and hatayi motifs like banners (Miniature 6) and other examples of kaftans reflecting the tastes of the period (Miniature 7) shed light on the splendor of Ottoman textile art.

***Fabrics:*** In Ottoman ceremonies, fabrics go beyond being mere decorative elements; they serve as a visual representation of power and prestige. Hil’ats, garments made from precious fabrics, banners, curtains, and floor coverings, used to display both the sultan’s power and generosity, added a special splendor to these ceremonies. In this context, the tradition of “spreading fabrics” stands out as one of the most striking expressions of respect and loyalty. When the sultan or a prince was to visit a place, valuable silk fabrics—especially seraser fabrics woven with gold and silver threads—were spread along the route, thus emphasizing the importance of the visited place and displaying the most concrete form of respect. The Surnâme-i Hümayun shows that this practice was carried out with gold and silver woven seraser fabrics when Prince Mehmed entered the Ibrahim Pasha Palace (Miniature 9) (Özaltın, 2017).

Another element that completes this visual feast is the “fabric weavers” (Miniature 8) and “kemhacı” (Miniature 10) in the craftsmen’s procession. The vertical, single-powered loom depicted in the miniature by the fabric weavers is an extremely valuable document about the weaving technology of the period. The clear depiction of the mechanism to which the warp threads are attached, the shuttle, the comb, and the beam onto which the woven fabric is wound contributes significantly to our understanding of this traditional production process. The kemhacılar procession, meanwhile, showcases the place of kemha, a shiny and colorful type of fabric woven with gold and silver threads, in Ottoman weaving art. Such magnificent ceremonies and the fabrics displayed contributed to the fame of Ottoman textiles beyond the empire’s borders and helped them gain an important place in the international trade and taste culture of the period.

***Peştimal weavers:*** The peştimal emerges as a textile product with both functional and symbolic depth in Ottoman social life. Traditionally, its most common use was found in bathhouse culture, where it served as a basic garment worn by both women and men (Koçu, 1967). In addition, another



type of peştamal used in daily life—especially in Anatolia—was tied around the waist.

Beyond its functionality, the pesthemal also has an important symbolic meaning within the culture of craftsmanship. In the vocational training process within the ‘Ahilik’ and guild organizations, wearing the pesthemal during the transition ceremonies from apprenticeship to journeyman and from journeyman to master has been a long-standing tradition (Ülgen, 2014).

In the miniature depicting the pesthemal makers’ parade in Surnâme-i Hümayun (Miniature 11), the way these products are displayed is noteworthy. Another interesting element on the stage is the bird Miniatures made of fabric and moved by a wheeled mechanism. Such mechanical designs can be considered part of the visual and theatrical richness of Ottoman celebrations (And, 2002).

*Bashma weavers:* *Bashma weavers* guild is one of the craft groups that attracted attention in the processions described in the Surnâme-i Hümayun, both for the patterned and embroidered clothing they wore and for the products they carried. These miniatures provide extremely valuable visual data on 16th-century Ottoman fabric weaving techniques, printed patterns, and the clothing culture of the period (Atasoy, 1997). The appearance of the bashmaci weavers in the miniatures is an important source not only in terms of aesthetic preferences but also in terms of the diversity of production technology and the sophistication of the craft tradition

In the manuscript, craftsmanship in the field of textiles and weaving is not limited to the bashma weavers but reflects a broad production network. The participation of other complementary craft groups—such as quilt makers, tailors who cut cloth, silk fabric merchants (*gazzaz*), silk printers, and spinners—in the processions reveals the diversity of 16th-century Ottoman textile production and its highly organized guild structure.

### 2.3. Mining Art

Metalwork occupies a significant place among the branches of Islamic art. Throughout Islamic history, works of art have been produced from various metals such as gold, bronze, copper, brass, and lead (Binark, 1978). During the Ottoman Empire period, techniques such as casting, hammering, and engraving were applied in metalwork. Metalwork is also frequently encountered in miniatures. The Surnâme-i Hümayun depicts groups of craftsmen practicing this art, including coppersmiths and engravers. The engravers’ guild is depicted as masters displaying their skills on mobile

workbenches mounted on a cart. In the miniatures, one of the masters is seen lying on sharp swords with a copper plate placed on his chest, which is being hammered by other coppersmiths (Miniature 12). In other Miniatures, behind the coppersmiths carrying gifts in their hands, an apprentice is seen hammering a copper pot on a cart, and tinned pots are displayed. Another scene features two young men carrying incense burners (Özaltın, 2017).

The hammer, anvil, bellows, furnace, water container used to cool the iron, and the ground on which the hot iron is hammered are depicted in detail, providing a clear understanding of the hot-ironworking practices of the period. The engraver has included every detail—from the characteristics of the coppersmith to the tools and equipment used.

*Zerger / Zergerân:* Zergerân held an important position among prestigious crafts in the Ottoman geography. In this art form, precious metals such as solid gold and silver, as well as rare stones like emeralds, diamonds, and pearls, were used extensively (Özaltın, 2017). Especially in the 16th century, the “filigree” technique was frequently preferred in works such as mirrors, bracelets, earrings, rings, cup covers, and belt buckles.

The Zergerân depicted in the circumcision wedding processions in the Surnâme-i Hümayun are illustrated with their setups resembling mobile workshops/shops (Miniature 13). In this display area, set up on a cart, the careful placement of craftsman tools such as anvils, hammers, and material boxes provides concrete data about the jewelry-making (Zergerân) practices of the period. These detailed depictions serve as a historical reference for researchers working in the field.

Another reflection of gold craftsmanship can be seen in the scene “Sultan Murad III Receiving His Surname Writer Intizami” (Miniature 14). In this miniature, the depiction of the sultan on a gold-plated throne shows that the tradition of golden thrones brought by the Turks from Central Asia continued in the Ottoman Empire (Pınarbaşı, 2004). Considering that the 16th century was the golden age of metalworking, it is natural to encounter such miniatures frequently.

Other occupational groups that can be evaluated within the scope of metalwork include scissors makers and saddlers (Miniature 15).

## **2.4. Wood Art**

Wood is an organic material widely used in both architectural structures and everyday objects in the material culture of the Ottoman period (Öten, 2021). Beyond being a structural and decorative element in architecture, it

was also the primary material used in the production of furniture and small objects such as desks, Quran and juz cases, drawers, hat boxes, chests, and tables. In the production of these works, local and imported tree species such as walnut, pear, cedar, apple, ebony, rosewood, oak, and pine were preferred, considering qualities such as ease of processing and durability.

Miniature manuscripts such as the *Surnâme-i Hümayun* contain rich descriptions of these uses of wood. The miniatures depict thrones, lecterns, chests, and examples of the most exquisite wood carving art, such as *mushebeb* (lattice carving), produced with an aesthetic concern beyond mere functionality. These miniatures constitute an invaluable visual resource for art history research, as they embody the forms, decorative styles, and aesthetic understanding used in woodworking during that period.

***Mushebbek Masters:*** *Mushebbek* masters is a lattice carving technique representing the finest examples of Ottoman woodworking (Karaman, 2021). This technique is created by interlocking or carving small pieces of wood together, resulting in a geometric patterned structure that is both sturdy and highly aesthetic. The depiction of a diamond and pearl-filled chest-shaped *müşebbek* lattice in the procession of the “Eski Bezistan Ehli” in the *Surnâme-i Hümayun* shows that this technique also served as a luxurious display tool for exhibiting rare and valuable items (Atasoy, 1997).

Meshwork craftsmanship holds a unique place not only in woodworking but also in the art of metalworking. As reported by Atasoy (1997), the ‘clothes made entirely of hammered copper’ worn by a group of young people in the procession are described as being decorated with meshwork. This description refers to the cage-like, openwork hammering technique applied to metal and demonstrates that filigree motifs were an indispensable component of Ottoman decorative arts across different materials and contexts.

**Chests:** The scenes depicted in the *Surnâme-i Hümayun* feature chests that serve various functions, ranging from everyday use to ceremonial purposes. Some of these chests are inlaid with precious materials such as mother-of-pearl, bone, and ivory, or decorated with marquetry work using different types of wood (Atasoy, 1997). The work also features a wide range of handicrafts, from clockmaking and candlestick making to engraving, pottery, and ink and pen production.

## 2.5. Ceramic and Pottery Art

One of the most important and deeply rooted branches of Turkish art, ceramics displays a rich variety in terms of decorative style. While plants,

flowers, leaves, and geometric patterns dominate this art form, depictions of animals and humans also feature (Arlı and Altun, 2008). In Ottoman ceramic art, stylized fish, birds, various animal Miniatures, ship depictions, and other figurative elements were occasionally brought to life (Öney, 2007).

The ceramic group that emerged in the third quarter of the 16th century, known as "Rhodes ware," is notable for its underglaze decorations using blue, dark green, turquoise, and white colors within black contours. During this most brilliant period of Turkish ceramic art, the works were decorated with patterns prepared in the palace workshops; naturalistic flower compositions were widely used alongside abstract motifs (Sözen and Güner, 1998). The ceramic examples in the Surnâme-i Hümayun are similar to Rhodes ware ceramics in terms of decorative style and technical characteristics. In the miniature in the work, gardeners are seen carrying fruits in blue and white ceramic jars with lids. These jars, decorated with sunburst and hatayi style ornaments, are described by Atasoy (1997) as being of Chinese form and produced in Iznik.

In miniature art, ceramic vases were frequently used as complementary elements in interior design. Ceramic vases also appear as decorative motifs in the works of renowned artists such as Nakşî, Levnî, and Abdullah Buharî. Similarly, it is known that vases depicted alongside flower arrangements in folk paintings served a decorative purpose.

**Glass Art:** Although direct written records regarding production and shaping techniques in Ottoman glass art are limited, miniatures from the period serve as a visual source for understanding developments in this field (Bayramoğlu, 1974). For example, while documents relating to the construction of the Süleymaniye Mosque and Complex (1550-1557) contain records on the use of glass, no documents have been found that shed light on the production processes. Although it is accepted that traditional Turkish glassmaking reached its most mature stage in terms of technique and aesthetics in the 17th and 18th centuries (Onur, 2007), very few concrete documents about this advanced industry have survived to the present day. In this context, the scenes depicting glassmakers in the Surnâme-i Hümayun constitute historical evidence of the glass production techniques of the period (Ertuğ, 1999).

The work depicts a parade performed by masters affiliated with the Câmgerân Guild in the presence of the sultan, and scenes of glass mounting are depicted in detail (Miniature 16). These miniatures suggest the existence of an organized glass industry during that period (Tamer and Yazar, 2015). The miniature shows craftsmen working around a mobile glass furnace

mounted on a cart, both participating in the procession and continuing production. The fact that this mobile workshop bears a strong resemblance to modern glass production tools and that the craftsmen's working methods indicate a real production process increases the documentary value of the depiction (Onur, 2007). As Atasoy (1997) also emphasizes, even if such a mobile workshop was organized solely for ceremonial purposes, it reflects a remarkable organizational skill when considering the technical capabilities of the period.

The miniature also depicts craftsmen holding large bottles upside down or carrying them on their shoulders, advancing with trays filled with glassware (Miniature 17) (Atasoy, 1997). These depictions of fragile glass vases and similar objects—which did not survive to the present day due to earthquakes and fires in Istanbul—are of great importance as secondary sources for 16th-century Ottoman glassmaking (Bayramoğlu, 1974). In addition, the colorful procession scenes of window-glass manufacturers and mirror makers (Miniatures 18, 19) document the specialization in different branches of the glass arts.

***Ceremonial Nahil Tree:*** Nahil is an Arabic word meaning date palm tree. In Ottoman culture, nahil is one of the traditional wedding decorations, adorned with colorful papers, fruits and flowers made of beeswax, animal Miniatures, and gold and silver leaves. Used in various ceremonies, especially circumcision and palace weddings, nahıllar appear as symbols reflecting the economic and social power of the person or institution organizing the event. Nahil trees, frequently depicted in Ottoman miniatures, are decorative elements carried in front of the bride or circumcised child during wedding or circumcision ceremonies, adding visual splendor to the festivities (Atasoy, 1997).

### 3. Result

This study systematically examines the Ottoman handicrafts depicted in the miniatures of the Surnâme-i Hümâyün, which chronicles the grand circumcision celebration organized by Sultan Murad III for Prince Mehmed in 1582, thereby shedding light on 16th-century Ottoman art production and the visual representation of handicrafts. It has been revealed that the Surnâme miniatures are not merely a narrative of a celebration; they also constitute a comprehensive visual source that documents the material technology, production techniques, aesthetic principles, and social hierarchy of the period.

The findings obtained within the scope of the study show that the wide variety of handicraft examples featured in the miniatures, such as weaving looms, metalworking tools, glass furnaces, woodworking tools, and ceramic products, clearly reflects the technical capacity and level of characteristic of 16th-century Ottoman craftsmanship. One of the most striking aspects of the *Surnâme-i Hümayun* is that during the festivities, the guilds of Istanbul artisans presented their products in a parade. These scenes showcase the production culture of the period within a social ceremony, highlighting both the handicrafts produced for the palace and the products used in everyday life. The color, form, and composition choices in the miniatures document in detail the functional and decorative qualities of the handicraft products.

This rich visual material in the *Surnâme* contributes significantly to understanding the interaction between the palace workshops and the guild organizations, the social prestige of craftsmanship, and the position of handicrafts under the patronage of the palace. Furthermore, the compositional structure of the miniatures, the technical precision in the details, and the color and motif choices reveal the decisive role of Nakkaş Osman and the Ehl-i Hiref guild in the work, confirming that the reign of Murad III marked a peak in Ottoman book art production and patronage.

Nurhan Atasoy's *1582 Surnâme-i Hümayun: Düğün Kitabı (The Imperial Surname: Wedding Book)* was used as the primary source in this research; however, the examples presented by Atasoy under the heading 'Handicrafts' were expanded in order to provide a more comprehensive assessment of the variety of handicrafts depicted in the miniatures. In conclusion, the *Surnâme-i Hümayun* is a unique source that goes beyond merely recording a ceremony, offering detailed documentation of the social structure, production technology, economic relations, culture, and material life of 16th-century Ottoman society. The depictions of handicrafts in the miniatures constitute one of the most significant components of this multi-layered structure, and the manuscript serves as a primary visual inventory for both Ottoman handicrafts and the broader history of crafts.

This study aims to contribute to the literature on Ottoman visual culture and the history of crafts by emphasizing the value of the *Surnâme* not only as an artistic work but also as a socio-economic and cultural document.

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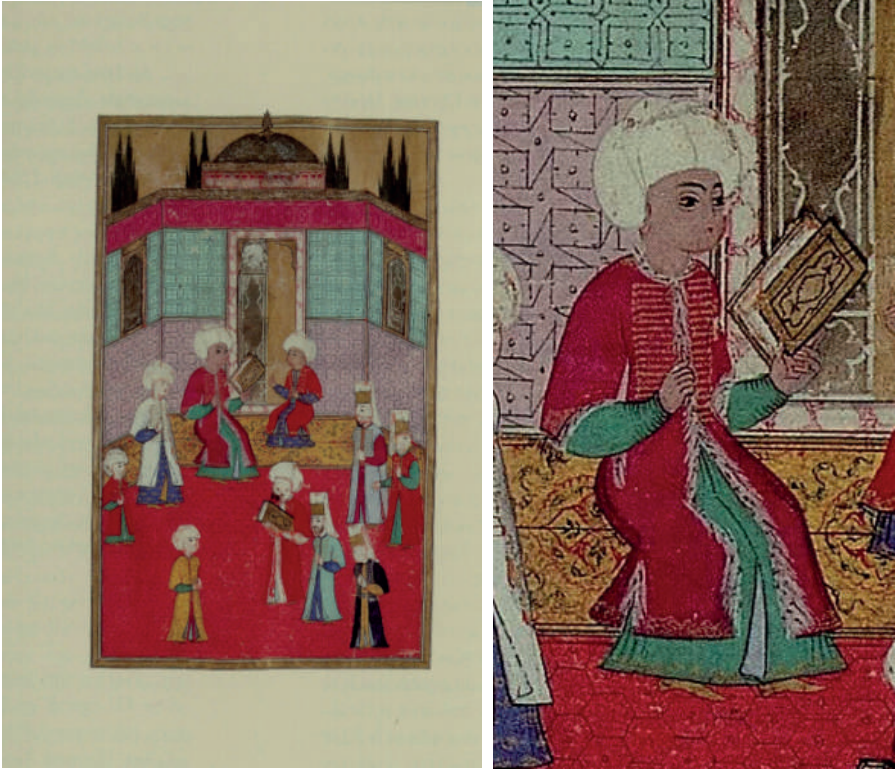


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## Miniatures



*Miniature 1: The Preparation of the Surname, (Atasoy, 1997).*



*Miniature 2-3: Entertainment Venues, (Atasoy, 1997: 31-43).*



*Miniature 4: Mübreyne Masters (Ottoman Burnishing Specialists),  
99b-100a, (Atasoy, 1997: 53).*



*Miniature 5: Calligraphers,  
214b, 212b, (Atasoy, 1997: 94).*

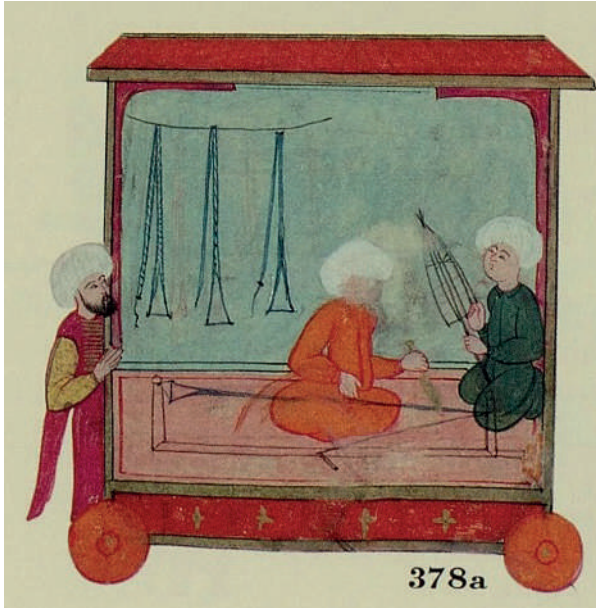




*Miniature 6: Caftan makers, Surnâme-i Hümayun, 121a, (Atasoy, 1997: 91).*



*Miniature 7: Caftan Tailors, Surnâme-i Hümayun, 22a, (Atasoy, 1997: 91).*



*Miniature 8: Fabric Weavers, Surnâme-i Hümayun, 378a, (Atasoy, 1997: 92).*



*Miniature 9: The fabric merchants' show, Surnâme-i Hümayun, 11b-12a, (Atasoy, 1997: 25).*



*Miniature 10: Kemha Weavers, Surnâme-i Hümayun, 330b-331a, (Atasoy, 1997: 77).*



*Miniature 11: Pesthemal weavers, Surnâme-i Hümayun, 338b-339a, (Atasoy, 1997: 79).*





*Miniature 12: Coppersmith, Surnâme-i Hümayun, 254b-255a, (Atasoy, 1997: 73).*



*Miniature 13: Zerger / Zergerân, Surnâme-i Hümayun, 357a, (Atasoy, 1997: 93).*





*Miniature 14: Gold-Plated Throne, Surnâme-i Hümayun, 429a,  
(Atasoy, 1997: 85).*



*Miniature 15: 'Sarac' weavers,  
Surnâme-i Hümayun (Atasoy, 1997: 48).*



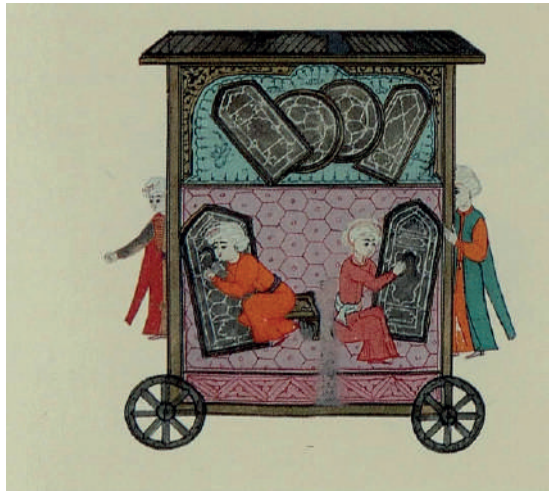
*Miniature 16: Old Bezistan,  
Surnâme-i Hümayun, 80a, (Atasoy, 1997: 93).*



*Miniature 16: Ceremony for the Transfer of Members of the Câmgerân Guild  
Surnâme-i Hümayun (Atasoy, 1997: 38).*



*Miniature 17: Câmgerân Guild, Glass Details,  
Surnâme-i Hümayun (Atasoy, 1997: 39).*



*Miniature 18: Glassmakers, Surnâme-i Hümayun  
(Atasoy, 1997: 99).*





*Miniature 19: Mirror Makers, Surnâme-i Hümayun*  
(Atasoy, 1997: 37).



*Miniature 20: Ceremonial Nabil Tree,*  
*Surnâme-i Hümayun (Atasoy, 1997: 20).*