

# Picturing the New World Marvels: Ottoman Paintings of Flora and Fauna and Political Discourse in the *Tarih-i Hind-i Garbî* (1583/4)

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*Tarih-i Hind-i Garbî* (also known as *İklim-i Cedid*) is a remarkable manuscript completed in January 1583/84, containing the earliest extant version of a text, the first one detailing new worlds and European explorations in a non-European context.\* The manuscript now held in İstanbul Beyazıt Devlet Kütüphanesi (Beyazıt State Library) under the shelfmark MS. 4969 (hereafter IBDK 4969) was most probably the presentation copy intended for the Ottoman sultan Murad III (r.1574–1595).<sup>1</sup> It is generally attributed to one madrasa professor and

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1 There is still some debate surrounding this attribution. Thomas D. Goodrich suggests that he is the editor of the presentation copy of 1584, and Giancarlo Casale seems to agree with him as he considers it anonymous. Baki Tezcan argues convincingly that Su'ûdî, who claims to be the author in this copy, should be accepted as the author: T. Goodrich, "Sixteenth Century Ottoman Americana or a Study of *Tarih-i Hind-i Garbî*", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1968, 68–70; G. Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration*

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poet, Seyyid Muhammed b. Emir Hasan, known by his penname Su'ūdī.<sup>2</sup> Drawing on European sources most of the work is concerned with these explorations and Americas or the “New India” referred to in this manuscript. At the same time, the introductory section provides information on the known world by using sources of Islamic geography and cosmography, including Zakariyya b. Muhammad al-Qazwini's *'Ajā'ib al-makhlūqāt wa Gharā'ib al-Mawjūdāt* (*Wonders of Creation and the Oddities of Existence*).<sup>3</sup> This section contains comments on the limitations of traditional sources, on which geographical discoveries of this era casted some doubt.<sup>4</sup> But this does not mean that the book is devoid of marvels, which populate the seas and oceans as well as the New World—the most exotic and faraway lands not only in Ottoman and but also in the European imagination. In a similar manner, wonder and wonders remained significant in early modern European intellectual culture, especially in the context of encounters with the new worlds.<sup>5</sup>

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(Oxford 2010), 160; B. Tezcan, “The Many Lives of the First Non-Western History of the Americas: From the New Report to the History of the West Indies,” *OA*, 40 (2012) [Other Places: Ottomans travelling, seeing, writing, drawing the world — A tribute to Thomas D. Goodrich, edited by G. Hagen and B. Tezcan, Part II], 1–38 at 33–36. On the life and works of Su'ūdī see also *TDVİA* s.v. “Mehmed Su'ūdî Efendi” (C. İzgi).

- 2 Tezcan, “Many Lives,” 24: “the decorations of the frontispiece (zahriye) of the royal presentation copy are in fact incomplete, suggesting that the final presentation of the codes to Murad III may not have taken place.”
- 3 Goodrich, “Sixteenth Century Ottoman Americana,” 71–79.
- 4 IBDK 4969, fol.5a. For other examples see M. Sariyannis, “*'Ajā'ib ve gharā'ib*: Ottoman Collections of Mirabilia and Perceptions of the Supernatural” *Der Islam*, 92/2 (2015), 442–467 at 452–459.
- 5 The literature on European travel literature in the context of encounters with new worlds is vast. See for example, S. Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: the of the New World* (Oxford 1991); D. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, 2 vols (Chicago 1965); F. Chiapelli and A.J.B Michael, *First Images of America: the Impact of the New World on the Old* (Berkeley 1976); A. Grafton, *New Worlds, Ancient Text: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery* (Cambridge 1992); idem, *European Encounters with the New World from Renaissance to Romanticism* (New Haven 1993); A. Fitzmaurice, *Humanism and America: An Intellectual History of English Colonization* (Cambridge 2003); J.-P. Rubies, *Travel and Ethnology: South India through European Eyes, 1250–1625* (Cambridge 2004); M. B. Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400–1600* (Ithaca 2018); C. R. Johnson, *The German Discovery of the World: Renaissance Encounters with the Strange and Marvelous* (Charlottesville 2008); S. Davies, *Renaissance Ethnography and the Invention of the Human: New Worlds, Maps and Monsters* (Cambridge 2016).

IBDK 4969 was part of a sizeable corpus of illustrated manuscripts containing Turkish prose works on wonders, miracles and the occult as well as romances with stories of monsters, charms and talismans set-in distant times and lands. Furthermore, these manuscripts are related to each other in terms of particular aspects of image-text relationship as well as physical and visual characteristics. The majority of the texts are translations from Arabic and Persian, of which, some had been translated earlier in the 15th century, but have not been illustrated at the Ottoman court prior to the mid-1580s.<sup>6</sup>

Thomas Goodrich's extensive work on *Tarih-i Hind-i Garbi*, including a critical translation based on a copy in Newberry Library, Chicago dated to around 1600, had laid the foundation for scholarly discussion. Goodrich identified Spanish and Italian sources on the New World and presented a list of known manuscript copies.<sup>7</sup> Building on his contributions, scholars have explored the book's place in early modern geographical literature, delving into the distinction of the presentation copy intended for the sultan and its underlying political messages.<sup>8</sup> In particular, historians Giancarlo Casale and Baki Tezcan argue that the manuscript presented to Murad III should be considered as a Book of Wonders that satisfied the curiosity for exotic and foreign while inviting the sultan and the ruling elite to be more politically active in the distant seas and lands explored and conquered by the Spanish and Portuguese. However, a closer examination of the remaining pictures together with the text indicate that the two aspects may not have been mutually exclusive.

How did the visual representations of wonders of the New World influence the political messages of the book? In addressing to this question, I draw on the emerging scholarship on Ottoman interest in the outside world. Scholars like Giancarlo Casale, Emine Fetvacı and Baki Tezcan have chronicled

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6 For an overview of the manuscripts see S. Bağcı, F. Çağman, G. Renda and Z. Tanındı, *Ottoman Painting* (Istanbul 2006), 186–211.

7 Goodrich, "Sixteenth Century Ottoman Americana", 71–79.

8 G. Hagen, "Kâtib Çelebi and *Târih-i Hind-i Garbi*", *Güneydoğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 12 (1998), 101–115; R. Murphy, "Review of Thomas D. Goodrich, *The Ottoman Turks and the New World*," *ArchOtt*, 12 (1987–1992), 277–280, esp. 279–280; Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration*, 160–163; idem, "Global Politics in the 1580s: One Canal, Twenty Thousand Cannibals, and an Ottoman Plot to Rule the World," *Journal of World History*, 18/3 (2007), 267–296; Tezcan, "Many Lives"; idem, "Law in China or Conquest in the Americas: Competing Constructions of Political Space in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire" *Journal of World History*, 24/1 (2013), 107–134.

how sixteenth-century Ottomans participated in the 'Age of Exploration' and demonstrated that their representations of various 'others' were linked to contemporary political dynamics.<sup>9</sup> Following these scholars, rather than questioning the authenticity of Ottoman knowledge about the new worlds, I use the depictions to discuss how wonder mediated geographical imagination vis-à-vis motives and agendas of the manuscript's makers. This inquiry builds on the scholarship on early modern Europe, exploring the significance of 'marvels of India' for European perceptions of peoples and places previously unknown in the Americas and Indian Ocean. Furthermore, it studies in detail the role of the representation of the 'marvellous' in European notions of conquest and appropriation. However this interaction is still approached primarily through a Eurocentric lens, and non-European perceptions of marvels remain little-explored.<sup>10</sup> By studying Ottoman visual representations of a realm that early modern Europeans considered exotic, my aim is not only to draw attention to the manifestation of interests and sensibilities associated with Renaissance Europe in what is seen as a non-European culture but also to discuss their particular meanings in historical context.

## Contextualising IBDK 4969

In order to begin to understand the meanings and functions of the depictions of the wonders of the new world in IBDK 4969, we must attempt to situate the illustrated manuscript into its broader cultural and socio-political context.

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9 Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration*. For an alternative argument about the centrality of the Mediterranean in early modern Ottoman policies and imperial imagination as well as the perception of the Indian Ocean and New World as 'peripheries' see P. Emiralioğlu, *Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Farnham 2014); B. Tezcan, "The Frank in the Ottoman Eye of 1583", in J. G. Harper (ed.), *The Turk and Islam in the Western Eye, 1450–1750* (Routledge 2011), 267–296; E. Fetvacı, "Others and Other Geographies in the Şehnâme-i Selim Hân", *OA*, 40 (2012), 81–100. See also A. Ekşigil, "Ottoman Visions of the West (15th–17th Centuries)", unpublished MA thesis, McGill University, 2014.

10 Exceptions include S. Subrahmanyam and M. Alam, *Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discoveries, 1400–1800* (Cambridge 2007). See also S. Subrahmanyam, "Taking Stock of the Franks: South Asian views of Europeans and Europe, 1500–1800" *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 42 (2005), 69–100; V. Gupta, "Wonder Reoriented: Manuscripts and Experience in Islamicate Societies of South Asia (ca. 1450–1600)", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, SOAS University of London, 2020.

The presentation copy intended for Murad III was made at a time when the Ottoman state underwent a profound socio-political transformation one that amounted to a regime change.<sup>11</sup> An important aspect of this transformation was the growing political importance of the sultan's close—and often unofficial—companions and members of the harem, namely royal women and palace eunuchs. Concomitantly, members of the inner court empowered by their proximity to the sultan, played a major role in its cultural activities.<sup>12</sup> Their empowerment was accompanied by a redefinition of the roles of members of the imperial council headed by the grand vizier and those of the members of the inner palace, ushering in a period of intense factional strife.<sup>13</sup> As argued by Emine Fetvacı, illustrated manuscripts played an active role in advancing the claims and interests of different court factions.

In the case of IBDK 4969, the significant figures shaping its messages and concerns are ambiguous. Giancarlo Casale proposes a potential connection with the 'Indian Ocean faction.'<sup>14</sup> Although it is difficult to identify who oversaw the illustrated manuscript's contents, the statements within the book regarding the Suez Canal project align with the political agenda of the 'Indian Ocean faction', led by the grand vizier Koca Sinan Pasha. Sinan Pasha, a patron of illustrated manuscripts with political undertones, may have played a role in the manuscript's creation.<sup>15</sup>

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11 For a designation of the period between 1580 and 1826 as the "Second Empire," and a thoughtful analysis of its political structures see B. Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge 2010). For relevant aspects of crisis and change see e.g. C. H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali (1541–1600)* (Princeton 1986); L.P. Pierce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford 1993). On the implications of period's transformations on architectural patronage, see G. Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton 2005), 506–520.

12 Z. Tanındı, "Bibliophile Aghas (Eunuchs) at Topkapı Saray", *Muqarnas*, 21 (2004) (Essays in Honor of J. M. Rogers), 333–343; E. Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court* (Indianapolis 2013).

13 This development is reflected, among other things, by Mustafa 'Ali's depiction of the reign of Murad III, which starts with an account of the close circle around the sultan. This has not been done for the description of the reigns of previous sultans. Mustafa 'Ali, *Künhü'l ahbâr*, fols. 286a–91a; see Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 294–95 for a summary and 176–77 for analysis of the rise of the circle around the sultan.

14 Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration*, 160–163.

15 Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court*, 218–237.

Alternatively, the manuscript's association with Damad Ibrahim Pasha, who acted as a patron to Su'ūdī is worth considering.<sup>16</sup> He was married to Ayşe Sultan, a daughter of Murad III and his powerful concubine (and later Queen Mother) Safiye Sultan. Ayşe Sultan and her sister Fatma Sultan were the owners of a remarkable Turkish miscellany of astrology, talismans, and divination with a series of single images of wonders of the world prepared in two richly illustrated copies for Sultan Murad III's daughters in 1582. Entitled *Maṭālī' üs-sa'āda ve menābī' üs-siyāde* (*Ascensions of Felicity and Sources of Ascendancy*), the manuscripts now in the Piermont Morgan Library (New York) and the Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris) contain an adopted translation of a late 14th and early 15th-century Jalayirid Book of Wonders, *Kitāb al-Bulhān* (the Book of Surprises) made by Su'ūdī.<sup>17</sup> Su'ūdī's connection to Ibrahim Pasha raises intriguing possibilities. While it remains speculative, he may have presented his works to the sultan through the mediation of Ibrahim Pasha.

### Making sense of the illustrations of the New World:

Creating a manuscript within and around the court involved a process of careful planning that evolved through drafts, suggesting that illustrations were not haphazardly selected merely for aesthetic appeal. While draft versions of *Tarīḥ-i Hind-i Ğarbī* do not appear to have survived, insights gained from studying the production processes of manuscripts like the *Shāhnāma-i Selim Khān* (an illustrated historical account of the reign of Selim II completed in 1581) and *Dāsītān-ı Ferruḥ ve Hümā* (a romance completed in 1601/2 and dedicated to

16 Tezcan, "Law in China or Conquest in the Americas," 131; idem, "The Many Lives of the First Non-Western History of the Americas," 33–37.

17 Ayşe Sultan's copy is Morgan Library, New York M.788: B. Schmitz, *Islamic and Indian Manuscripts and Paintings in the Pierpont Morgan Library* (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, 1997), 71–84. Fatma Sultan's copy is BnF, Paris Suppl. Turc 242. For a catalogue entry, E. Blochet, *Catalogue des Manuscrits Turcs de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (Paris 1932–33), 279–280. The manuscript has been digitalised and can be accessed via <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8427189w> For a facsimile edition published with a translation and accompanied by a volume of essays, see M. Miró (ed.), *The Book of Felicity* (Barcelona 2007). I thank Prof. Serpil Bağcı for sharing with me her copy of this rare source, which is not available in the libraries in England and Turkey. Bağcı et al., *Ottoman Painting*, 191–192. On the Arabic original see, S. Carboni, *Il Kitāb al-bulhān di Oxford* (Torino 1988). This manuscript is available online: <https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/5c9da286-6a02-406c-b990-0896b8d4bbb0/surfaces/af05c73f-f70b-4c4c-afc9-d7dcdec42366/>

Mehmed III) reveal that the subject matter and articulation of the paintings mattered for their creators. Far from being arbitrary *Tarih-i Hind-i Garbî*, like other Ottoman illustrated books wonders, resembles a visual cabinet of curiosities in two dimensions.<sup>18</sup> Much like collectors, the creators of an illustrated book of wonders carefully curated selections from wondrous phenomena described in the text, choosing how to visualise and represent them. This deliberate selection process underscores the creators' intentions to portray faraway lands in specific and intentional ways.

The copy of *Tarih-i Hind-i Garbî* intended for the sultan, which has two world maps and five illustrations on the remained pages, depicting the flora and fauna of the New World. As Goodrich, who reconstructed this illustrated manuscript, remarks, it originally contained more images.<sup>19</sup> He points to a missing folio in the first section, describing India and the Indian Ocean region, likely featured an image of the famous WaqWaq tree, given the similar introduction style used for the remaining illustrations.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, a folio is missing after the account of a half-man, half-fish creature (a “merman” if you will) near Cubagua island near modern-day Venezuela. The description reads: “In that sea, there is a kind of fish that sometimes appears. Its upper half is like a man’s; it has hair and a beard. Its arms are also like a man’s, but it is hairy. It is in this form.”<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, both images are found in a version that is in the Topkapı Palace Library and illustrated slightly later than the presentation copy (figure 1).<sup>22</sup> While identifying the European sources that the Ottoman text draws on, Goodrich remarks that the image of a merman is not found in the *Historia general le Las*

18 O. Impey and A. MacGregor (eds.), *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Oxford 1985); P. Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley 1994).

19 Goodrich, “Sixteenth Century Ottoman Americana”, 54–56.

20 BDK, fols. 7b–8a. Also noted in Tezcan “The Many Lives”, 7.

21 BDK, fol. 56b–57a. Quoted in Goodrich, “Sixteenth Century Ottoman Americana”, 197. For the merman see, TPL R.1488, fol.63b.

22 TPL R.1488, fols. 18a, 63a. A facsimile of the Revan manuscript (without marginalia) is published: Istanbul Research Center, *Tarih-i Hind-i Garbî veya Hadîs-i Nev (A History of the Discovery of America)*, ed. S. Artemel (Istanbul 1987). The institution also published a version that contains a transcription and Turkish and English translations, see, F. Yavuz, R. Bragner et al., *Tarih-i Hind-i Garbî veya Hadîs-i Nev – History of the West Indies known as the New Hadith* (Istanbul 1999).

*Indias*, which was the foundation of this part.<sup>23</sup> It appears that here the makers of the Ottoman manuscript drew inspiration from the depiction of such a creature in the section on sea creatures in Wonders of Creation manuscripts, which were among the sources of the *Tarīḥ-i Hind-i Ğarbi*.<sup>24</sup>

Such a scenario finds a parallel in the image on folio 133b that depicts birds of the New World (figure 2). Notably, the illustration features the legendary Simurgh or phoenix, which is not mentioned in the text. Significantly, the marvellous bird is represented snatching a naked figure. Although the figure is unfortunately severely damaged, Bağcı et al. connect this depiction to an episode from the *Shahnama*. As they note, the drawing may have been inspired by the scene of Simurgh carrying Zal back to his father, Sam, illustrated in various copies of the work.<sup>25</sup> It appears that old marvels and myths had a role in shaping Ottoman perceptions of the new worlds and their flora and fauna, as had the stories known as marvels of the East or, more precisely, India did in European and Persian imaginations.<sup>26</sup>

The remaining images emphasise the New World's flora and fauna, as exemplified by the image accompanying the wonders of Uraba and Darien (“acā'ib al-Ūrāba and Ṭāryān”) (figure 3).<sup>27</sup> The text under this heading details various animals, tapirs, parrots, turkeys, and abundant fruit trees, like avocado, mamme, guava and one that resembles jujube.<sup>28</sup> An ethnographic account follows, covering physical features, lifestyle, marital, social and religious practices, as well as the trade of the locals. Despite possessing some traits of barbarity, they lead partially civilised lives with men typically going about naked, except for nobles, who wear a gold ring over their genitals, and women wearing a loin cloth from waist to knees. They worship the sun, create idols and establish simple towns.<sup>29</sup>

23 Ibid, 197.

24 For early versions of Qazwini manuscripts containing an image of waterman, see S. Carboni, *The Wonders of Creation and Singularities of Painting: a Study of the Ilkhanid London Qazvīnī* (Edinburgh 2015), 156.

25 Bağcı et al., *Ottoman Painting*, 203, fn 44 and 204.

26 Subrahmanyam, “Monsters, Miracles”; Berlekamp, *Wonder, Image, Cosmos*, 170. On topographical wonders associated with India, see also Gupta, “Wonder Reoriented.”

27 IBDK 4969, fol. 51b–54b. Quoted in Goodrich, “Sixteenth Century Ottoman Americana”, 368–373.

28 Quoted in *ibid.*, 368–370.

29 IBDK 4969, fol. 53b–54b: ...*Ve ol diyārın halkınıñ elvāni çok şarudur. Ve kāmeteri vasat ve saçları kaçları çokdur. Ricāli üryān gezerler. Ama begleri altundan bir mücevvef nesne*



However, the depiction in the manuscript intended for the sultan notably excludes the inhabitants and their customs. Instead, it focuses on several tapirs among trees and grass, together with colourful parrots and turkeys. This preference for showcasing natural wonders over wonders pertaining to human agency is not an isolated occurrence in the manuscript. In other instances, too, the makers of the manuscript appear to have highlighted the natural wonders over customs and traditions, as seen in the second image of the remaining portion of the manuscript, accompanying the description of the unique qualities of Hispaniola (figure 4).<sup>30</sup> The image depicts the island's peculiar animals, namely the manatee (or sea-cow)—a hybrid creature depicted in the lower right corner of the composition—and cocuyos, a type of bird with illuminated wings, as the Spanish embark on a nightly expedition to witness these marvellous animals. It also provides insight into the island's abundant natural resources, including logwood, cassia trees, and a mountain that boasts a lapis-lazuli, salt, gold, silver, and copper mine, as detailed in the accompanying text. Nevertheless, the text also delves into the physical characteristics of the indigenous people, including their skin colour and facial features, as well as their customs, such as clothing, marriage and burial practices, and religious beliefs involving the worship of idols and divination practices.<sup>31</sup>

The emphasis flora and fauna in IBDK 4969 was not an inevitable visual choice by the manuscript's creators. In contrast, another illustrated Turkish prose work on wonders, found in the British Library under the shelf mark

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*peydâ idüb zekerlerine geçürürler. Ve bunları bellerinden dizlerine dek tennüre tutarlar. Ve murçe şeklinde bir nev' hayvân vardır. Anı tutub bir nev' nebât ile hâlt iderler. Ve bedenlerine tîlâ iderler... ve kulaıklarına keçeler ve tudaıklarına ikişer halka taçarlar. Begleri ne kadarsa 'avret isterse alır. Ama gayrisi ikiden artuğ almaz. Ve herkes akâribinden evlenir... Hışarları küçükdür... Tâ'îfe-i mezbûre şemse 'ibâdet iderler. Ve şeytân la'în ba'zı ezmânda anlara zâbir olur. Her ne şekilde zühûr iderse anuñ misâli bir şanem peydâ idüb aña taparlar...*  
Quoted in Goodrich, "Sixteenth Century Ottoman Americana", 371–373.

30 The account in IBDK 4969 is incomplete; the manuscript breaks off at fol. 45a. Goodrich, "Sixteenth Century Ottoman Americana", 342–347. The image is on IBDK 4969, 43b.

31 IBDK 4969, fol. 44b describes the physical attributes and clothing of indigenous people: ...  
*Ve cezâ'ir-i mezbûrede sâkin olan eşhâşın elvâni kestâne gibidir. Ve gözlerinin nûru azdır. Ve fehm ve idrâkları kâşîrdir. Ve beynleri dirâz ve sūrâbları vâsî' ve derun ve devrikdir. Ve cebheleri büyük ve kati bekdir her yarağ te'sîr eylemez. Saçları bellerine dek inmişdir. Ve cümlesi 'üryân gezüb ekserî miyânlarından zânûlarına dek bir hırka ile setr ederler. Ve güçlarına ve beynlerine halkalar taçarlar...* For a translation the remainder of the account see Goodrich, "Sixteenth Century Ottoman Americana", 345–347.

Harleian 5500 (ca. 1595–1600), sharpens its focus on the wonders of human world. Man-made monuments, customs and practices form the majority of manuscript's remaining paintings. This emphasis on cultural geography is evident in an entry on folios 42a–42b, which relates both a strange sea creature and a ritual. It starts with a description of the monstrous creature, evidently a centaur, which is half man and half horse.<sup>32</sup> It then shifts to a festival with religious undertones, which forms the subject of the accompanying image rather than the peculiar creature (figure 5). This departure from the emphasis on natural wonders indicates a diverse array of visual choices made by makers of the Ottoman manuscripts within the genre.

In addition to strange creatures, the image in IBDK 4969 related to Hispaniola Island prominently features the Spanish conquerors (figure 4). They are depicted experiencing the natural wonders of the otherwise “empty” lands, the island they possessed, suggesting a symbolic connection forged by the manuscript's makers between marvelling and possession. This association is similarly evident in the first image of the manuscript, portraying Spanish King Ferdinand's audience with Columbus. In this scene, Columbus recounts the riches of the Americas, presenting specimens of precious minerals, exotic flora and fauna as gifts (figure 6).<sup>33</sup> As a result, the King names the newfoundland “New India,” appointing Columbus as its governor, and then sends him on another expedition.<sup>34</sup>

Goodrich deems the illustration at this point in the text, somewhat redundant, as the source did not have one in this place.<sup>35</sup> Baki Tezcan notes that the

32 Harleian 5500 fols. 42 a–b.

33 IBDK 4969, fol. 25a.

34 IBDK 4969, fols. 24b–25a: ...*mülākāt idüb pîş-keşlerini çekdi. Ve ol cezireniñ evşâf ve ahbarını beyân ve māl ve metâ'ını 'ayân eyledi. Otuz 'aded tûñiler getürmüş idi ki ba'zı yâküt misâl aḡmer ve ba'zı levn zaferânda şufret-i şâfiye ile mülevven ve ba'zı otuz 'aded elvân-i muhtelif ile münakkaş ve müzeyyen idi. Ve nice 'aded ḡurda ḡurda ernebler ki kuş ve zenbleri fâr misâl levnleri âbî ve peşmleri sincâbî idi. Ve 'gâlipâôs' nâm bir mürg ḡoş-ḡirâm getürmüş idi ki laḡmi t̄âüsdan leziz idi. Ve üşûl-u nebâtdan bir aşl nesne ki ḡalâvetde şekere beñzer. Ve bahâr kısmından bir şey 'acib ki ta'amı tarçınıya karib idi. Pes rüy bed-nihâd bu kişsalardan katî mesrûr ve şâd olub kûluna çok ri'âyet eyledi. Ve ol diyâra 'Hind-i Cedide' deyü nâm virüb ol vilâyetin ḡükümetini kûluna tefvîz taḡallüd eyledi... ve yine bin beş yüz adam alub on yedi pâre keştî ile tekrâr Hind-i Cedid semtine gide...*

Quoted in Goodrich, “Sixteenth Century Ottoman Americana”, 329–330.

35 Goodrich, “Sixteenth Century Ottoman Americana”, 329–330.

depiction suggests the manuscript makers' desire to draw the attention to Spanish gains in the New World.<sup>36</sup> He points out to the unusual depiction of Ferdinand as a mighty ruler comparable to an Ottoman monarch in terms of costume and pose. The architectural setting, including circular arches, dome and decorative details aligns with contemporary Ottoman architecture and representation of architecture in manuscript paintings. The fountain in the middle, a common feature in Ottoman enthronement scenes, aids to familiarise the foreign ruler. As such, the audience scene portrays the Spanish ruler in a manner, Tezcan proposes, worth considering as an example particularly in aspects, like undertaking expeditions to faraway lands.<sup>37</sup> Parrots and hutias depicted in the image, also featured later in the manuscript's final section on the Americas, signify the fecundity of the New World and its conquest.

The emphasis on the fecundity of the faraway lands becomes clear when comparing the illustrations of the presentation copy with later illustrated versions of the text, especially the Newberry Library manuscript as Goodrich establishes a close correlation between this copy and the original Spanish version. Returning to the image illustrating the natural wonders of Uraba and Darien, this picture, like the others, is introduced by the remark, "among the trees that have been mentioned above, they depict the animal in this way," referring to the depiction in the European source.<sup>38</sup> The image in the Newberry Library manuscript shows a couple of animals against three trees with tufts of grass.<sup>39</sup> This suggests that the image in IBDK 4969 copy made for Sultan Murad III, depicting various tapirs, colourful parrots and turkeys departs from the original, and later Ottoman versions of the text for that matter, in terms of detail and variety of animals. The same can be said about image regarding the New World's animals, namely jaguar, anteater, and armadillo (figure 7).<sup>40</sup> The Newberry copy's image depicts the three abovementioned animals in three registers without distinguishing the levels with landscape elements.<sup>41</sup> Again the image in IBDK

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36 Tezcan, "The Frank in the Ottoman Eye of 1583," 265–296, esp. 281–283; idem, "The Many Lives", 23–29; idem, "Law in China or Conquest in the America", 125–126.

37 Tezcan, "Law in China or Conquest in the America", 125.

38 Goodrich, "Sixteenth Century Ottoman Americana", 370.

39 For a black and white reproduction see, *ibid*, 135 and 135–137.

40 IBDK 4969, 132a. For comparison see black and white copies of the interpretations of the illustration in later manuscripts reproduced in *ibid*, 171–174.

41 *Ibid*, 172, 174.

4969 provides a richer interpretation with different animals depicted in pairs, in the words of Goodrich, “like a parade to Noah’s ark,” against a background of rocky hills with several trees.<sup>42</sup> Despite featuring predatory animals, the scene exudes a sense of peace and harmony, portraying, much like the previous image, an idyllic setting where different species coexist.

Highlighting variety and diversity as well as peace and tranquillity, the images of IBDK 4969 present the New World as a place of abundance and wealth, a paradise on earth so to speak. This perspective becomes evident in the illustration of the wonders of Darien, where a tree with water at the centre echoes the imagery of the tree of life found in religious-themed images with flowing water at its roots (figure 8). For example, it is found in a depiction of the prophet Muhammad near the spring of paradise integrated into the Persian *Fālnāma* (H.1702). This manuscript seemingly originated in a Shi’i milieu in the porous Ottoman-Safavid border during the last quarter of the 16th century, but it is unclear when this manuscript entered the palace collection.<sup>43</sup> More significantly, we find a similar figure in an illustration depicting Adam and Eve with their twin children in the copy of the *Zūbdeṭü’t-tevārīb* presented to Sultan Murad III in 1583, that is around the same time as the IBDK 4969 (figure 9).<sup>44</sup> In another copy of the text dated 1586, we find the figure illustrating the water of life (ab-i ḥayāt) in the story of Alexander’s search for the marvellous spring with the prophet Khidr, who is shown by its side in the painting (figure 10).<sup>45</sup>

“The marvellous”, writes Stephen Greenblatt in the context of Christopher Columbus’ explorations, “has little or nothing to do with the grotesque or outlandish,” denoting, “to be sure, some departure, displacement, or surpassing of the normal or the probable, but in the direction of delicious variety and loveliness.”<sup>46</sup> Columbus and subsequent European explorers, like Bartolome de Las Casas, presented the Americas as a sort of earthly paradise to encourage colo-

42 Ibid, 174.

43 The image is on folio 26b of the album. Farhad and Bağcı eds. *Falnama: the Book of Omens* (London 2009), 53: “The volume must have entered the Ottoman royal collection some time before the reign of Ahmed III (reigned 1703–1730), whose seal appears on the flyleaf and offers a *terminus ante quem* for its acquisition.” The binding dates to the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II (1876–1909), which is when the folios were bounded or rebounded.

44 TIEM 1973 fol. 18b.

45 TPL H.1321, fol. 24b.

46 Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, 76.

nial activities.<sup>47</sup> Maybe, we can assign a similar role to the images of the presentation copy of *Tarīḥ-i Hind-i Ğarbī* dedicated to Murad III, helping the Ottoman ruler to develop a political interest in the region blessed with copiousness.

Highlighting a concern for the natural world, in the presentation copy of *Tarīḥ-i Hind-i Ğarbī*, pictorial messages added to the narrative, portraying the New World as a land of abundance and wealth. This portrayal is but one of ways in which Ottomans engaged with distant lands. The depictions of wonders of the world have often been overlooked as curious fancies, entertainment or mere superstition. Engaging with this material requires us to move away from our post-Enlightenment empiricist ways of thinking about ‘reality’ vs. ‘fantastic.’ Seen in this way, a detailed examination of Ottoman illustrated Books of Wonders, paying attention to their images and text together with contexts of production and consumption, as this hinted by the case of IBDK 4969 in this short paper, are crucial sources to better understand political and intellectual interests in the non-Ottoman world.

To conclude, I would like to point that there are intriguing parallels between the visual and verbal presentation of the marvels of the New World at the Ottoman court as reflected in the *Tarīḥ-i Hind-i Ğarbī* and Renaissance European contexts—a point that requires further research. While tentative suggestions for a possible patron have been made, further research will unravel the individuals who shared the ideas and agendas expressed in the manuscript concerning Ottoman activities and interests in distant lands.

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 52–85; Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World*, 165–255.



Fig. 1 The WaqWaq Tree in India. *Tarih-i Hind-i Garbi*, TPL R. 1488, ca, 1580-1590, fol. 18a.



Fig. 2 Birds. Su 'udî, *Tarih-i Hind-i Garbi*, 1583/84, IBDK 4969, fol. 133b.



Fig. 3 Wonders of Uraba and Darien. Su'ûdî, *Tarih-i Hind-i Garbi*, 1583/84, IBDK 4969, fol.53a.





Fig. 4 Haiti. Su'udi, *Tarīḥ-i Hind-i Ġarbi*, 1583/84, IBDK 4969, fol.43b.



Fig. 5 Ritual and the smoking tree. BL Harl. 5500, fol. 42a.



Fig. 6 King Ferdinand receiving Columbus. Sü'udî, *Tarîḫ-i Hind-i Ğarbi*, 1583/84, IBDK 4969, fol. 25a.



Fig. 7 New World's fauna. Su'udi, *Tarih-i Hind-i Garbi*, 1583/84, IBDK 4969, fol. 132a.



Fig. 8 Tree and water (detail). Su'ūdī, *Tarīḫ-i Hind-i Garbī*, 1583/84, IBDK 4969, fol.53a.



Fig. 9 Adam and Eve with their twin children. Seyyid Lokman, *Zübde'tü't-tevārîh*, 1583, TIEM 1973, fol. 18b.

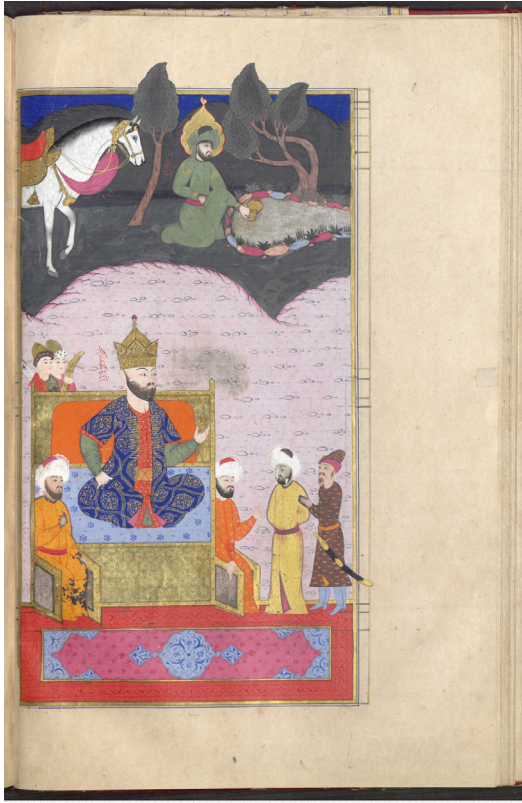


Fig. 10 Alexander in search for the Water of Life. TPL H.1321, fol. 24b.

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