

# A Microhistorical Approach: Case-studies from Early Modern Ottoman World



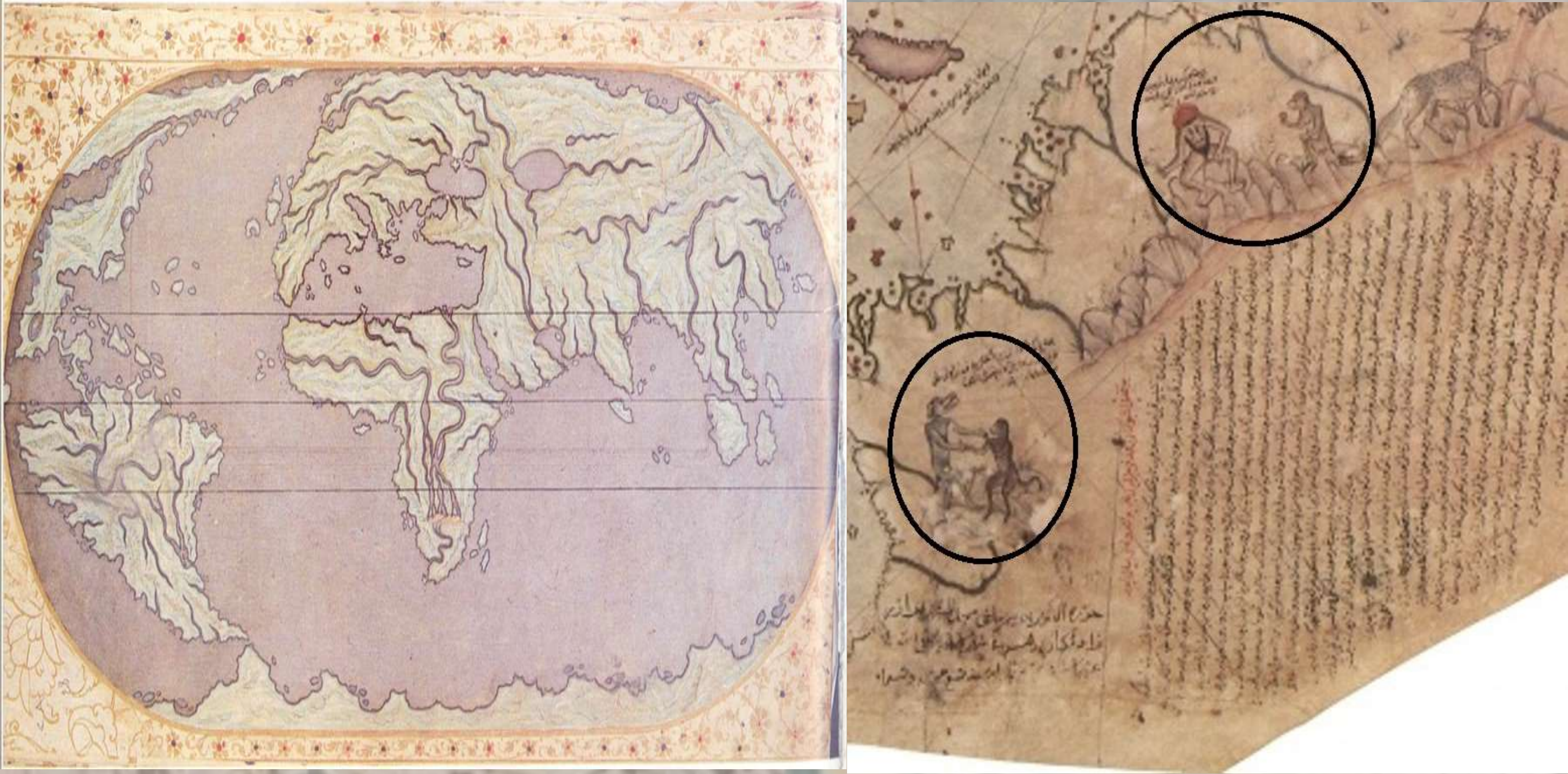
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### The Abstract



#### What was known about the New World in the 16th century in the Ottoman Empire?

The aim of this project is to answer the question of what the Ottoman Empire knew about the discovery of America in the 16th century and to make a textual and visual analysis of the narratives on the discovery of the New World in the sources of that century. Additionally to show the relations between Western and Eastern information and their representations.

The poster is based on the primary sources of the information obtained from the external sources of the explorers and narrators of the Ottoman Empire such as *Piri Reis*, *Seydi Ali Reis* and *Tarih-i Hind-i Garbi*. The project brings together two concept which are European marvels and ajaibül garaib for finding their common points. In this study, it has been discovered that throughout the literature review, the concepts are used to describe new locations discovered in the general framework.

The initial point of this study is based on Seydi Ali Reis' narrative on the new world. In this narration, Seydi Ali Reis says that the information he calls Tere-Nova (New World) is obtained from a sailor captured by Magellan's fleet. It was also found in the Western sources that this person was a Rhodesian sailor named Francisco Albo. Then, this project focused on Seydi Ali Reis' depictions of creatures in America.

When a comparative history study is made, it can be seen that Ptolemy and Piri Reis used the same figures for different geographies, and that these figures were perfectly similar to the figures in the book of Acaibu-l Mahlukat, completed by Kazwini in 1533. In this project, an inquiry was made on the origin of these figures.

### PROJECT DETAILS



In this study, microhistory approach has been determined as a methodology by focusing on some basic sources rather than examining all aspects of the discovery of America in general. In the next stage, the information mentioned in these sources has been expanded within the framework of comparative history.

When Piri Reis talks about the creatures in China in the Kitab-ı Bahriye:

There are all sorts of people in them. God created every one of them.

*Some have deer-like horns; some have an eye in the middle. Most of them are adjacent to their feet, the wind blows out the tongue like a bird. O friend, some of the neck and head joined the neck and took place on the chest. Many face like dogs; tail is just like a dog tail. Although it's like a dog, it's not, and it doesn't bite. O beautiful, perhaps freakish man, but his mouth is like a dog's nose.*

Also Seydi Ali Reis makes the same descriptions in the discovery of the "New World".

*...And its people are unaware of the holy book and the prophet, but they are inclined to be wild and their faces are like dog face and men exists with no necks, that is to say, they heads are over their chests, but they look like men with 12 meters height.*

As can be seen from the photographs in the poster, the same figures were used in very different geographies and often for new places discovered. This consistency is an indication that these figures are a basic narrative tradition. The origins of these figures were followed throughout the study.

### OBJETIVES

- To compile what the Ottoman Empire knew about the discovery of America.
- Find out what strange creatures mentioned in the light of this information.
- To find the similarities of these creatures with other creatures mentioned in other cultures and the first examples in the history of the world and thus to test whether there is a general tradition of narrative technique.

### PROJECT DETAILS



- Blemmyes (fantastic creature) from the Nuremberg Chronicle, an illustrated World history written in Latin by Hartman Schedel in 1493 and Ptolemy's World map



- Tarih-i Hind-i Garbi, page 256-266.

### CONCLUSION

Mürûcû'z-zeheb is a work of geography written by Mesudi in 943. Mesudi, known as the Herodotus of the Arab world, mentioned the existence of many strange beings and creatures in his work and was frequently used as a source in the works written after him. In the past, books on geography and travel were often given names such as "Acâibü'l-büldân", "Acâibü'l-Hind", "Acâibü'l-mahlûkât". The word acâib here means "wonders, unseen and unheard-of strange things". Among these works, the works of "Kitâbü'l-Mushrib 'an ba'zî acâ' ibi'l-Mağrib" and "Tuḥfetü'l-albâb and Nuḥbetü'l-a' câb" written by Abu Hâmid Muhammed al-Girnâtî (d. 565/1169) it is not only a book of travel and geography, it also contains many "acâib" and mythological information. The geographic and cosmographic work "Acâ' ibü'l-mahlûkât ve garâ' ibü'l-mevcûdât " written by Kazvîni (d. 682/1283) was much admired in its own genre, translated into Turkish literature and sometimes added to Iran and Turkish literature.

European Marvels are also found in the narratives of Herodotus and Ptolemy. As a result, it can be argued that these works were not only written as geographical information but also followed a certain form of expression like a literary text.

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