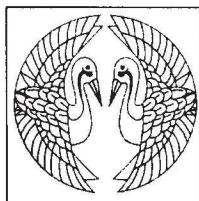


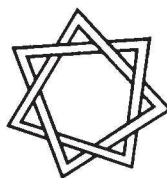
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PRESENTING THE MANUSCRIPT

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AN ILLUSTRATED ARABIC MANUSCRIPT OF A TRANSLATION OF A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY GREEK CHRONOGRAPH

The aim of the present article is to draw attention to an illustrated Arabic manuscript (call number C 358), preserved now in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies. This Christian-Arabic manuscript provides an interesting illustration of one facet of seventeenth-century Syrian cultural history. The work contained in this manuscript and, as a cultural artifact, the manuscript itself present us with a fine example of the interrelation and mutual influence of Western and Eastern culture.

The manuscript, measured 19.0 × 29.0 cm., is written in calligraphic *naskh*, in black ink. It contains 203 folios, 25 lines per page. Surface of the text: 12.0 × 22.0 cm. There are also 54 blank folios adjoining to those with miniatures, which are intended to protect them from damage. The text is enclosed in double red frame; European pagination; European dense polished paper with watermarks — a trefoil with the letters G and B, as well as three crescents. The protecting blank folios also have watermark — A. BONEFI. Headings are written either in red ink or in a large *thulth*. The cardboard binding is covered with brown leather; the leather has stamping of geometrical lines and little rosettes. The inside of the cover has orange paper glued on it, with engraved gold designs. These are depictions of dancing men and women in European clothes, of playing musicians, as well as of European-styled houses. This paper is partly damaged. The manuscript was restored by some of its owners or readers.

The manuscript contains an Arabic translation from the Greek of a little-known New Greek chronicle composed by Bishop Matthew of Cyprus, better known as Matthew Kigalas, or Tsigalas (d. 1642 ?) [1].

The chronicle, entitled *Néa súnovis diafóran ístoríōn* and published in Venice in 1637 is a universal history of the chronograph type and consists of two parts. The first one covers the period from the creation of the world to the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great (r. 337—350); the second, the history of the emperors of Byzantium from Constantine the Great to the seizure of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453. The work also comprises a brief history of the Ottoman sultans up through Murad IV (r. 1623—1640). The work closes with a section dealing with an ecclesiastical history of Byzantium which is brought up to 1636.

Matthew Kigalas drew up his work on the basis of a Greek chronicle attributed to Dorotheus of Monemvasia [2], from which he borrowed some factual material. However, Matthew Kigalas introduced into the first part of his book many additions, primarily of mythological character, as well as data from some other Greek chronicles. In his exposition of Byzantine history from 1391 to 1578, he included with hardly any alteration the section on “Political History” from Martino Crusio’s well-known “*Turcograeciae*” [3].

Like the chronicle by Pseudo-Dorotheus, which went through around twenty editions between 1631 and 1818 and was translated into Russian under the Russian Tsar Aleksey Mikhaylovich (r. 1645—1676) [4] and into Arabic by Patriarch Macarius of Antioch, the chronicle of Martino Crusio gained fame in the seventeenth century and influenced Russian historiography.

As was mentioned above, the Greek chronicle by Matthew Kigalas was published in Venice in 1637, most likely in a very small edition, since only a few copies are now known. One of these copies is held in the State Library of Russia in Moscow. The full translation of Matthew Kigalas’ chronicle into Russian was made at the end of the seventeenth century by the monk Euthymius, *spravshchik* (press corrector) at the Moscow press. For unknown reasons, the Russian translation was not printed, but was in circulation in a significant number of manuscript copies. Several copies of this Russian translation are now held in the Library of Armenia [5].

In 1648, on the initiative of Macarius, the Patriarch of Antioch, an Arabic translation of the second, more interesting part of Matthew Kigalas’ chronicle [6], dealing with the Byzantine history from Constantine the Great to the fall of Constantinople and the Ottoman sultans through Murad IV, was made in Aleppo. The concluding section on the ecclesiastical history of Byzantium was for some reason not translated, which left the Arabic version without an ending. Hence, the text leaves readers with the impression of an unfinished work. Also translated from the Greek were four chronological tables with a list of Byzantine emperors and Ottoman sultans, the bishops and patriarchs of Constantinople up through Isaiah Agariotes and the Constantinople patriarchs under the sultans, ending with Neophyte, who took up the post in 1636.

The work, which in Arabic received the title *al-Durr al-manzūm fī tāriḫ mulūk al-Rūm*, was translated by two members of a literary circle headed by Patriarch Macarius. The role of this circle in the literary renaissance which took place in Syria in the seventeenth century has already been illuminated by I. Iu. Krachkovsky. The name of one of the translators, Paul of Aleppo, is well known in connection with his travels to Russia together with Patriarch Macarius and his description of their first journey in 1652—1659 [7]. The other translator was Joseph al-Muṣawwir, who also made a notable contribution to the cultural life of Syria of the period. We have, however, very little information on his life; what we do know is largely based on the additions he made to several Christian-Arabic manuscripts which he copied.

We know that Joseph al-Muṣawwir was of Greek descent; his full name is Yūsuf b. Anṭuniyus b. Suwaydān (Swidān) al-Ḥalabī [8]. His *nisba* indicates a connection to Aleppo, one of Syria's largest cultural centres. In one of our manuscripts, copied by him in 1647, Joseph al-Muṣawwir calls himself the pupil of Patriarch Euthymius II (1634—1647), known for his correction of prayer-books. After the latter's death, he began to collaborate with Patriarch Macarius, who made frequent mention of Joseph's name in his works, calling him his “spiritual pupil”.

At the request of Patriarch Macarius, Joseph al-Muṣawwir made translations from the Greek for purposes of enlightenment independently or in collaboration with Paul of Aleppo [9]. It is possible that he was also friends with the latter. An example of their joint labours was the translation of the second part of Matthew Kigalas' chronicle, although the major role in the translation apparently belonged to Joseph al-Muṣawwir, as he knew Greek well [10].

Joseph al-Muṣawwir was not only a translator but also an outstanding calligrapher, and gained even greater fame as a miniaturist as well, hence his *laqab* — al-Muṣawwir (the Artist). All of these facets of Joseph al-Muṣawwir's talents are reflected in the manuscript C 358 of *al-Durr al-manzūr fī tāriḫ mulūk al-Rūm* in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies. This manuscript was copied by him in calligraphic *naskh* and decorated with a large number of miniatures, which form the most outstanding feature of the copy and distinguish it from other known manuscripts of this work [11].

The manuscript contains 94 well preserved miniatures, in which the artist portrayed the emperors from Constantine the Great (r. 324—337) through the Ottoman sultans, ending with Murad IV (r. 1623—1640). Only Nicephorus II Phocas (r. 963—969) is missing in this portrait gallery. The portrait of the Nicephorus Phocas may be lacking because of his aggressive war policy towards the Arabs in Syria as well as of his hostility to the Church. It is known that showing favour to the Athos monks, he was opposing to the Church's enrichment. For example, he issued a law prohibiting the foundation of new monasteries. Besides, Phocas forced the high clergy to sign the document that prohibited the patriarch to appoint bishops without approving them by the emperor.

The manuscript also lacks a portrait of John I Tzimisces (r. 969—976), which is, however, due to the loss of the folio that contained this miniature. This folio was later restored, without the miniature, by some owner or reader of the manuscript.

The miniatures included in the manuscript testify to Joseph al-Muṣawwir's being a first-rate artist, although it should be noted that they belong to the later period of his activities and are less exquisite than his earlier miniatures surviving in another manuscript (now also in the holdings of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies).

The Byzantine emperors are depicted in half-figure, most frequently en face (profiles were clearly not the artist's strong point), in splendid ceremonial dress with an orb or sceptre, sometimes with a sword and cross, more rarely with an open scroll or book. There are several group portraits among the miniatures. Although the miniatures there resemble one another in their general form, all of the portraits are, nonetheless, individualised by the artist. Employing the means at his disposal, the artist strove to reflect in their outward appearance certain characteristic features of the rulers, basing these depictions most likely on descriptions found in the text. The portrait of the Emperor Julian the Apostate (r. 361—363) (see *fig. 1*) can serve as a useful example. A man of fanatic conviction and extraordinary energy, Julian struggled for the revival of paganism, employing all means possible. Only his death during his Persian campaign put an end to all expectations of the adherents of the old faith. He is depicted in three-quarters-figure with an orb in one hand and a drawn sword in the other. His red-bearded face is grim, from behind his shoulder a dark devil with the wings of a bat leans over and whispers in his ear. Unfortunately, Julian's visage in the miniature was intentionally erased (later, it was traced in outline). Another figure of a devil on the orb appears to have been drawn in later.

On one of the miniatures the Emperor Phocas (r. 602—610) is shown (see *Plate 1* on p. 56). It is evident that the painter sought to present a realistic portrait of this emperor, who ascended the throne as a usurper, as a result of the rebellion of the army and paupers of Constantinople. The semi-barbarian Phocas became notorious for his tyranny and numerous executions of the Byzantine nobility. His face on the portrait seems to express his terrible temper. The whole of his figure, lacking a monumental solemnity characteristic of the portraits of other emperors, looks sinister.

A miniature depicting the Emperor Constantine the Great, the founder of the Byzantine Empire (see illustration on the front cover), is distinguished by a special finesse. The noble appearance of the emperor, as he is shown on the miniature, as well as a big cross he holds as if it were a sword, seems to emphasise the personal exploits of Constantine in the establishment of Christianity in the Roman Empire.

Among the miniatures of the manuscript there is one on which two emperors, Stauracius (r. 811) and Michael I (r. 811—813) (see *Plate 1* on the back cover), are depicted. Both of them are shown in profile, with garlands on their heads. It is hard to say with certainty why the two emperors appear on the miniature together. One of the explanations could be that the Emperor Michael I, the husband of Stauracius' sister, was elevated to the throne when Stauracius was still alive. It is known from the history that Michael I was a mere plaything in the hand of the Church and distinguished himself by his abundant gifts to clerics, as well as by his severe persecutions of heretics, especially the Bogomils. One can also notice the striking resemblance of



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

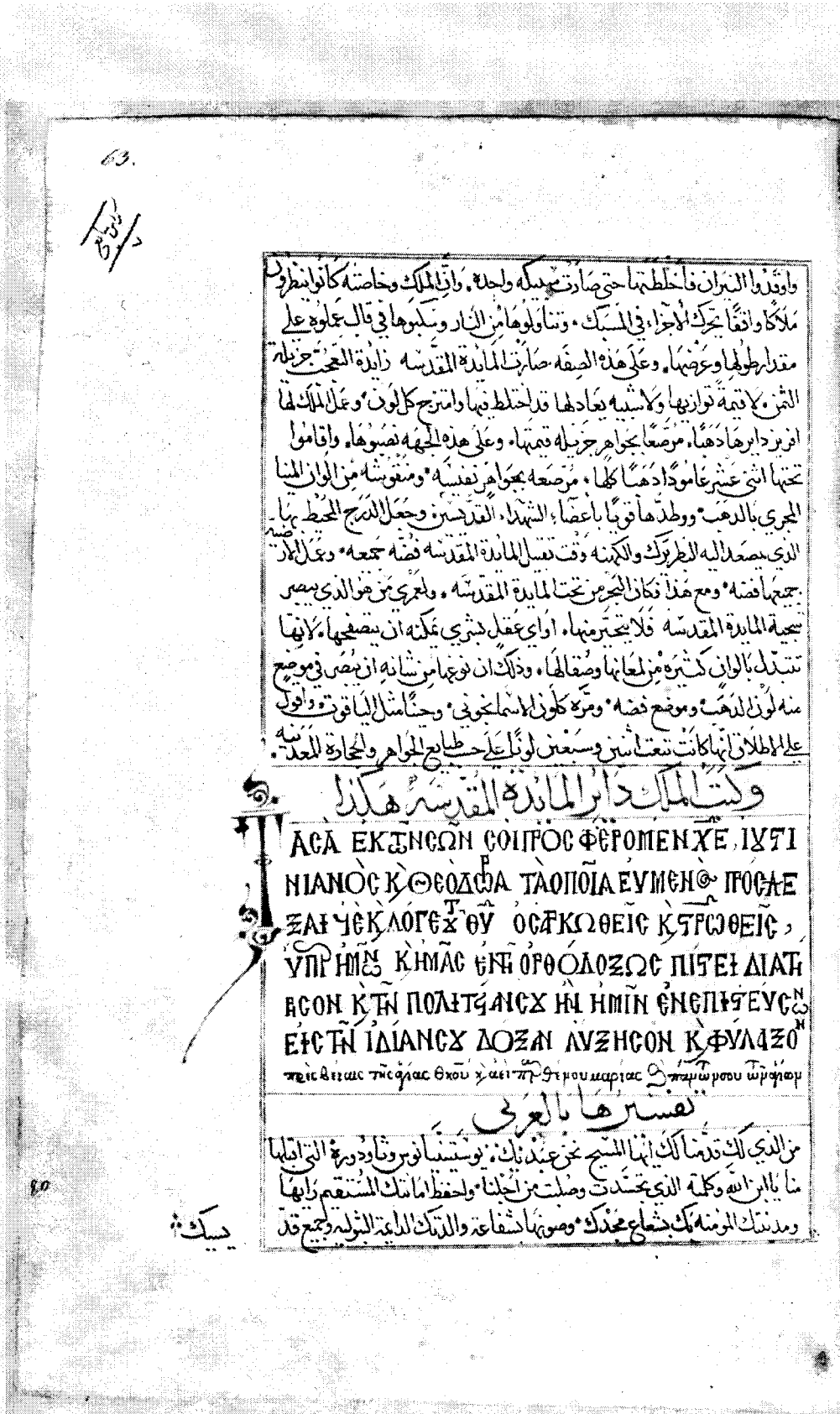


Fig. 3

the portrait of the Emperor Stauracius to his depiction on one of the pendant stamps surviving in the collection of the State Hermitage [12].

Finally, one miniature portraying the Emperor Leo VI the Wise (r. 886—912) (see *Plate 2* on the back cover) draws special attention. The noble simplicity and earnestness, with which the emperor is depicted, have their historical background. It is known that Leo VI was an outstanding character proved to be a prolific legislator. Interestingly, the emperor is shown with a scroll in his hand, on which the text written in red can be clearly seen.

The unified late Byzantine style (which displays noticeable Western influence), with its palette of bright rich colours prevailing, the splendour of the garments, enriched by gold, the texture of the fabric and the sparkle of gems, conveyed with a masterly combination of colours, is typical only of miniatures with the portraits of Byzantine emperors. The portraits of the Ottoman sultans up through Murad III (1574—1595), though betraying the same depiction style (cf. *Plate 2* on p. 56), clearly demonstrate an influence of Oriental manner of miniature painting.

The portraits of the sultans after Murad III are made already in the style of late Turkish miniatures in which a different, more reserved scale of colours is used. The sultans are for the most part depicted in full figure. Their figures are often shown full, with short legs and arms, and their faces look somewhat feminine and rather expressive. The last sultan in this row, Murad IV, a contemporary of the artist, is depicted together with his vizier Husrev Pasha, a quiver with arrows behind his back.

In all the miniatures, the background is white-blue; the depictions are usually two-dimensional. In a few cases, coloured blocks, intended to depict the palace floor made of different sorts of marble, create the appearance of depth. All of the miniatures are framed. To the right and left of the head, the names of the emperors and sultans are written into the miniatures in large Greek letters (sometimes the inscriptions are located on the margins of the manuscript).

In addition to the miniatures, the manuscript is adorned with an elegant coloured *'unwān*, with sky blue and gold prevailing. The usual formula with which Christian-Arabic manuscripts begin is written into the *'unwān* in white.

Unfortunately, the manuscript lacks a colophon or any concluding words. Nor did the copyist indicate the title on the title page; it was written in later in a different hand. It seems that the copy was for some unknown reason left unfinished. The time of the copy and the name of the calligrapher and artist can be established only indirectly.

Paul of Aleppo's marginal additions to the manuscript indicate that it was copied and adorned with miniatures after Patriarch Macarius' first journey to Russia, which finished in 1659, but no later than 1667, by which time Joseph al-Muṣawwir was no longer alive [13]. It is most likely that this manuscript was the artist's last work.

The fate of this manuscript is no less interesting or important for us. Paul of Aleppo's numerous marginal notes testify that he was its first owner. Joseph al-Muṣawwir possibly completed this manuscript especially for Paul, perhaps as a memento, or probably for presenting to someone during Macarius' second visit to Russia in 1664. Be it as it may, the further fate of the manuscript, and of its owner, turned out to be connected with Georgian mid-seventeenth century culture and history. There is reason to suppose that the manuscript was with Paul of Aleppo in Georgia while he was returning to his homeland from Russia. This is the key to the mysterious circumstances under which the manuscript found its way into the hands of Vakhtang VI (1675—1737), ruler of Georgia. That he indeed possessed the manuscript is attested by written additions to the miniatures, which contain translations into Georgian of the Greek inscriptions. R. R. Orbeli established, on the basis of her painstaking palaeographic investigation and comparison with the autograph of Vakhtang VI's diary of his journey to Russia, that these notes belong to this ruler.

One can assume that the manuscript remained in Georgia after Paul died there in 1669 and was buried in one of the country's monasteries. Around 1737, Vakhtang VI would have had an opportunity to become acquainted with the manuscript in a monastery and make his notes.

The path by which this manuscript found its way back to its Syrian homeland remains vague. Written additions make clear that in 1762 its owner was a certain Christian Arab (his name is written over). In 1777 and 1784 the manuscript belonged to two brothers — Ilyās Buṭrus and Anṭoniy Buṭrus al-Samhānī, also a Syrian. At the very end of the eighteenth or the beginning of the nineteenth century, the manuscript was acquired by J. L. Rousseau (1780—1831), a well-known collector and French Consul in Aleppo and Tripoli. Rousseau's collection of Oriental manuscripts, which contained the manuscript in question, was bought in two groups by the Russian government in 1819 and 1825. It then entered the manuscript collection of the Asiatic Museum, at present the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies.

Notes

1. See É. Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique ou description raisonnée des ouvrages publiés par des grecs au dix-septième siècle* (Paris, 1894), i, pp. 355—6; D. Russo, *Studii istorice greco-române* (Bucurști, 1939), i, pp. 87—91.

2. I. N. Lebedeva, "Khronika Psevd-Dorofeia Monemvasiiskogo i eĭ russkii perevod" ("The chronicle of Pseudo-Dorotheus of Monemvasia and its Russian translation"), *Trudy otdela drevne-russkoĭ literatury*, XXI (1965), pp. 68—74; also see *eadem*, "Pozdnie grecheskie khroniki i ikh russkie i vostochnye perevody" ("Later Greek chronicles and their translations into the Russian and Greek"), *Palestinskiĭ Sbornik*, fasc. 18 (81) (Leningrad, 1968).

3. *Turcograeciae libri octo a Martino Crusio ... utraque lingua edita* (Basileae, 1584).

4. We know also of a translation of the work into Romanian, see Russo, *op. cit.*, pp. 91—3.

5. I. N. Lebedeva, "Grecheskii original russkogo perevodnogo khronografa" ("The Greek original of a translated Russian chronograph"), *Sbornik soobshchenii i materialov Biblioteki Akademii nauk SSSR po knigovedeniiu* (Leningrad, 1964), pp. 305—7.

6. A comparison of the chronicle's Arabic text with the Russian translation in the Academy of Sciences library manuscript, which was independently checked against the Greek text according to the 1637 Venetian edition by I. N. Lebedeva, shows that it is a full, and not a compiled translation.

7. For detailed bibliographic information, see I. Iu. Krachkovskii, *Izbrannye sochineniia* (Selected Works) (Moscow—Leningrad, 1957), iv, pp. 686—705ff.

8. See the colophon of the autograph manuscript of Joseph published in J. Naspallah, *Catalogue des manuscrits du Liban* (Harissa, 1958), i, p. 104.

9. On manuscripts of Joseph's translation, see G. Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur* (Citta del Vaticano, 1949), iii, p. 113.

10. Checking certain excerpts of the Arabic and Russian texts against each other demonstrates their complete linguistic and stylistic congruence, which allows one to conclude that these are high-quality translations.

11. For a detailed description of the manuscript, see V. Rosen, *Notices sommaires des manuscrits arabes du Musée Asiatique*, Première livraison (Saint-Petersbourg, 1881), pp. 135—41, No. 190. There is another manuscript of this work in the autograph of Joseph al-Muṣawwir which is possibly the first copy of the translation, see *Bibliothèque de manuscrits Paul Sbath, Catalogue* (Cairo, 1928), i, p. 111, No. 999. Other copies are enumerated in G. Graf, *op. cit.*, p. 107; yet another manuscript is located in Baghdad, see Kūrki's 'Awād, "Al-makḥṭūṭāt al-tārīkhiya fī khizānat kutub al-maḥṭaf al-'Irāqī", *Sūmar*, XIII (1957), p. 55. In this connection it is worthy of note that the copying of one of the manuscripts of this translation was begun in the summer residence of Russian Tsars in Kolomna (not far from Moscow), in 1654, by a copyist who belonged to the retinue of Patriarch Macarius during his first journey to Russia. The copy, however, was completed in Syria in 1679 by another person, see *Bibliothèque de manuscrits Paul Sbath*, iii, pp. 102—3, No. 1305; also I. Iu. Krachkovskii, *Izbrannye sochineniia* (Selected Works) (Moscow—Leningrad, 1960), vi, pp. 543—4.

12. See *Istoriia Vizantii* (The History of Byzantium) (Moscow, 1967), ii, p. 69.

13. See Macarius' conclusion to his translation into Arabic of the first part of Pseudo-Dorotheus' chronicle, completed in Russia in 1667, where the name of Joseph al-Muṣawwir is accompanied by the word *marḥūm* ("deceased").

Illustrations

Front cover:

The portrait of the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great (r. 324—337), the founder of the Byzantine Empire. Miniature from a Christian-Arabic manuscript entitled *al-Durr al-manzūm fī tārikh mulūk al-Rūm* (C 358) in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, fol. 11b, 11.8 × 9.5 cm.

Back cover:

- Plate 1.** Portrait of two Roman Emperors — Stauracius (r. 811) and Michael I (r. 811—813). Miniature from the same manuscript, fol. 101b, 11.9 × 7.5 cm.
- Plate 2.** Portrait of the Roman Emperor Leo VI the Wise (r. 886—912). Miniature from the same manuscript, fol. 120a, 11.2 × 10.0 cm.

Inside the text:

- Plate 1.** Portrait of the Roman Emperor Phocas (r. 602—610). Miniature from the same manuscript, fol. 74b, 11.7 × 8.8 cm. (see p. 56).
- Plate 2.** Portrait of the Ottoman Sultans Osman I (r. 1299?—1324) and Orkhan (r. 1324—1360). Miniature from the same manuscript, fol. 168a, 12.0 × 6.7 cm. (see p. 56).
- Fig. 1.** Portrait of the Roman Emperor Julian the Apostate (r. 361—363). Miniature from the same manuscript, fol. 28a, 12.0 × 12.0 cm.
- Fig. 2.** Portrait of the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid II (r. 1481—1511). Miniature from the same manuscript, fol. 182a, 11.2 × 8.0 cm.
- Fig. 3.** Folio 63a of the same manuscript. Surface of the text: 12.0 × 22.0 cm.