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**Colour plates: “Iskender-nāme” by Aḥmedī (1334/35—1412/13), MS C133 from the collection
of St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences (see p. 47—61).**

Front cover:

Fol. 58a. Iskender and Gūlshah, 10.7 × 10.9 cm.

Back cover:

Plate 1. Fol. 93b. Iskender Slaying a Dragon, 10.7 × 13.2 cm.

Plate 2. Fol. 140b. The Poet Aḥmedī (?), 10.7 × 14.3 cm.

Plate 3. Fol. 249b. The Religious Dispute in the Presence of Sultan Orkhan, 10.7 × 14.7 cm.

Plate 4. Fol. 254a. The Murder of Sultan Murad I, 10.7 × 14.3 cm.

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PRESENTING THE MANUSCRIPT

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AN ILLUSTRATED TURKISH MANUSCRIPT OF "ISKENDER-NĀME" BY AHMEDĪ

In the collection of the St. Petersburg branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies there is an illustrated manuscript of the poem "Iskender-nāme" by Ahmedī (1334/35—1412/13), written in old Anatolian Turkic at the end of the 14th century. The poem composed after the most popular work by Nizami is one of the earliest samples of Turkic Anatolian literature and presents great interest from many points of view. The life and conquests of Alexander the Great commemorated in the vast literary tradition of the Near East enjoyed an immense popularity among the Oriental peoples beginning from the ancient times. It is therefore hardly surprising that the subject was taken by the renowned Turkish poet of the 14—15th centuries Ahmedī, who wrote his own version of Alexander the Great romance in verse for his patron — the Germiyan ruler Süleyman (1377—1387). The poet, soon after his work had been accomplished, found a new patron at the court of the Ottoman ruler Bayezid I (1389—1402) to whom he intended to present his poem with an additional section dealing with the history of the Ottoman dynasty. The disaster near Angora (Ankara), where the Ottoman army of Bayezid was defeated in 1402 by the troops of Timur (1370—1405), made him change his plans, because of Bayezid's captivity and death soon afterwards. The poet presented his work to the son and successor of Bayezid, Süleyman (1402—1410), who became the third powerful patron of Ahmedī and a true judge of his poetical talent [1].

The very vein of the poem, similar to the epic character of the tales of "Shah-name" by Firdousi with its rich iconographic tradition, demanded some illustrations to be made. Unfortunately, only few 15th century manuscripts of Ahmedī's poem have come down to us, and it is very significant that the earliest one, dated from 1416, contains twenty miniatures [2].

Only three of these miniatures, according to Metin And, match in style the date of the manuscript's execution [3], while the others are older than the manuscript itself. As specialists point out they were modeled on the miniatures executed in Baghdad in the 13th century [4]. Another illustrated copy of Ahmedī's poem, which was made in the 15th century (1475), is also known. The manuscript is preserved in one German collection [5]. Unfortunately, I was not able to see this copy and to make any judgment on the style of its painting.

Among the great number of manuscripts of this poem by Ahmedī which have survived, there are many illustrated copies executed in the 16th century, mainly in Shiraz and Herat. Two of them belong to the manuscript collection of

the St. Petersburg branch of the Institute of Oriental studies. In this paper I aim to present only one of these, since its provenance, dating and iconographic features provide some problems. As for the artistic style of the manuscript under call number B 277, it was copied in Shiraz in A.H. 948 (A.D. 1541/42) by the prominent Shirazi calligrapher Muhammad Katib for Khazan Shah Kuli Beg, probably a representative of the Turkmen Zulkadir dynasty by that time deprived of the supreme power in its principality. In any case, the commissioner of the copy is named Zulkadir in the manuscript's colophon [6]. O. F. Akimushkin considers Khazan Shah Kuli Beg to be the emir (prince) of the above-mentioned Turkmen tribe [7]. The manuscript's miniatures represent the mature and exquisite late Shirazi style, greatly influenced by the Herat school of painting.

Turning to another illustrated manuscript of Ahmedī's poem "Iskender-nāme", which is kept in the Institute collection under call number C 133, it should be noted that it presents many problems. To begin with, there is no colophon, which makes its attribution rather difficult. The manuscript came to the collection in 1864. Its previous owner, I. M. Tolstoy, was known in pre-Revolutionary Russia as a collector of antiquities. The manuscript has an old Oriental cardboard binding, covered with bright brown leather. The upper and lower covers of the binding are decorated with medallions in the corners and in the center, with stamped filigree floral designs, and with small figures of hares and foxes (?) placed in each corner. The filigree work preserves traces of original gilding. The binding also has a stamped border frame, once also gilded. The stamped patterns of the inner part of the cover are not visible because of a sheet of paper glued over it during restoration of the manuscript before it came to Tolstoy's collection.

Manuscript bindings of this type are well known in the 15th—16th centuries in the Near and Middle East, as well as in Central Asia, especially in the Timurid period. Bookbindings of this kind were made in the 15th and early 16th centuries in Yazd, Shiraz, Herat, Tabriz, as well as in Baghdad [8]. The binding of our manuscript was made, most probably, in the late 15th century, which is confirmed by the date of its miniatures (one of the points we shall try to prove here).

Manuscript C 133 has 289 folios. Each folio measures 25.5 × 16.0 cm. The text is arranged in two columns, which are framed by two thin black lines. The space between them is gilded. The text measures 18.5 × 11.0 cm. There are 15 lines per page. The columns of the text are separated by two rows of double vertical black lines. The

space between the lines is gilded. The text of the manuscript is written on dense, cream-colored Oriental paper. There is a little label in the upper right corner of the inner part of the cover, which testifies that the manuscript was displayed at the International Exhibition of Persian Art in London in 1931. It is evident from this label, that the manuscript was then attributed to the book art of Persia. There are also three Oriental seals on folios 1a and 289a. The seal on folio 1a has an almost illegible inscription: "Tevfik (?) M...yir bek (bey?)". The other two ellipsoid sealings on the last folio of the manuscript are erased so that they became illegible. Only the words "Han ... Muhammad..." can be distinguished on one of them. The manuscript has Oriental pagination. The first folio of the manuscript had been restored before it was acquired by I. N. Tolstoy, most probably in the East — besides its new Oriental-style colored *unvan* it has the initial part of the text reconstructed. The second, original folio of the text has survived, even though its upper edge is lost, so that some *beyts* on both sides of folio 2a are missing. The damaged folio is glued over a new sheet of European paper. As a whole, the condition of the manuscript is not bad, though there are many evident signs of its being often read. For example, some faces in the miniatures are deliberately erased or have black lines below the necks — to show the negative attitude of the reader to certain personages. Some folios of the manuscript are illuminated in a special way. The *beyts* are arranged crosswise (see *fig. 1*) and are richly decorated, according to a fashion of manuscript illumination characteristic, in particular, of the 15th century Shiraz manuscripts of the Timurid period. The manuscript is written in almost calligraphic *nastalik*, with headings of sections written in red and gold. The whole text is vocalized, as it was practiced in manuscripts representing the works of the early Ottoman poetry.

The manuscript contains 40 miniatures which bear no artists' signatures. The attribution of the miniatures can provide a reliable foundation for the dating of the manuscript and for establishing its origin. For this reason I think it important to describe all the miniatures as they are represented in our manuscript.

1) f. 9a — the first miniature (10.7 × 8.3 cm) depicts a feast on the occasion of Iskender's birth, arranged by his father Feylekus. He is shown sitting in a garden, encircled by his courtiers and musicians. A nurse on the left is showing the swaddled new-born Iskender to his father. In the foreground our attention is drawn to a tray with blue and white Chinese bowls, which one can see on the Timurid miniatures from Shiraz and Herat. The miniature seems to have been executed by an experienced artist, well acquainted with Persian models.

2) f. 12a (10.7 × 7.4 cm) — Iskender is depicted talking with Aristotle, Hyppocrates, Plato and Socrates. This miniature seems to be executed by the same painter and in the same style. Only one detail — a house with a red-tiled roof in the center of the picture, betrays its Ottoman origin.

3) f. 28b (10.7 × 10.9 cm) — the right part of the miniature is damaged by dampness. On the left Iskender is depicted sitting. In the foreground one can discern a cock, picking grains, and a house with a red-tiled roof. The subject of the miniature may be connected with the famous episode with the envoys of the Persian king Darius. According to the legend the ambassadors of Darius told Iskender that the Persian king had an army innumerable

like grains. In response Alexander asked to bring him a cock and some grains. The cock picked the grains. So Alexander made the envoys understand, that the army of Alexander would gain a victory over the Persian troops.

4) f. 33b (10.7 × 11.0 cm.) — a battle between the Persian army of Darius (Dara in our text) and the army of Iskender is depicted. The style of the miniature is completely Persian, modeled on the early Timurid iconography. Only one detail is worth our special attention. I mean the manner of depicting the draped edges of the main mounted figures' cloaks. Such kind of the draperies are very similar to those which one can see in Byzantine mosaics or Byzantine miniatures [9].

5) f. 35b (10.7 × 10.7 cm.) — the miniature depicts a scene of execution of two persons named Makhhar and Makhyyar (*fig. 2*). They are hung on ropes tied to a very carefully depicted cross-beam. The figures of the executed and the executors are smaller in comparison with a rather strange looking personage. He wears a red headgear, which looks similar to those which we see in the miniatures of our manuscript illustrating the section of the poem dealing with the history of the Ottoman dynasty. This headgear looks very Ottoman. The manner of depicting somewhat enlarged figures of the Ottoman personages in the miniatures illustrating non-Ottoman subjects, is known, for example, in the 16th century Ottoman manuscript of Rawzat al-Safa by Mir Khwand (d. 903/1498) [10]. This peculiarity in the Turkish miniatures has been noted by G. M. Meredith-Owens. In his opinion it could happen either because another painter was employed to make them or because of the patriotic feelings of the miniaturist. Another example when personages of different size appear in one miniature will be mentioned below. It is nevertheless difficult to explain the fact that an Ottoman-looking figure emerges in a miniature, depicting a non-Ottoman subject. I find no explanation to this iconographic peculiarity, though I am inclined to think that two different painters were involved in illustrating the manuscript. One of them was, so to say, responsible for the Ottoman vein of the paintings meeting the taste of the person who had ordered the manuscript.

6) f. 52b (10.7 × 10.9 cm) — a fortress in Sistan besieged by the troops of Iskender is shown in the miniature (*fig. 3*). The painter succeeded in demonstrating the vigorous atmosphere of the battle. A figure of a bombardier is particularly expressive. He is shown standing near his siege-machine, picking up a missile from the ground. It should be noted that such realistic and vigorous manner is characteristic of the Ottoman miniature painting school. It is very likely that this miniature was executed by an Ottoman painter. He aimed to strengthen the impression of the battle by depicting two cannons, their barrels visible in the slots of the fortress wall.

7) f. 58a (10.7 × 10.9 cm) — the miniature (see the plate on the front cover) depicts a rendezvous between Iskender and Gulshah. It was executed most probably by the Ottoman painter too. The enlarged and a bit stretched figures of the personages are shown near a castle. The right proportions between the castle and the human figures are not maintained. It is true, that this feature was characteristic of the early Timurid Shiraz style, though the personages of this miniature look even bigger than in the Shiraz models. The most striking detail of this miniature is the manner of depicting the castle's window-openings

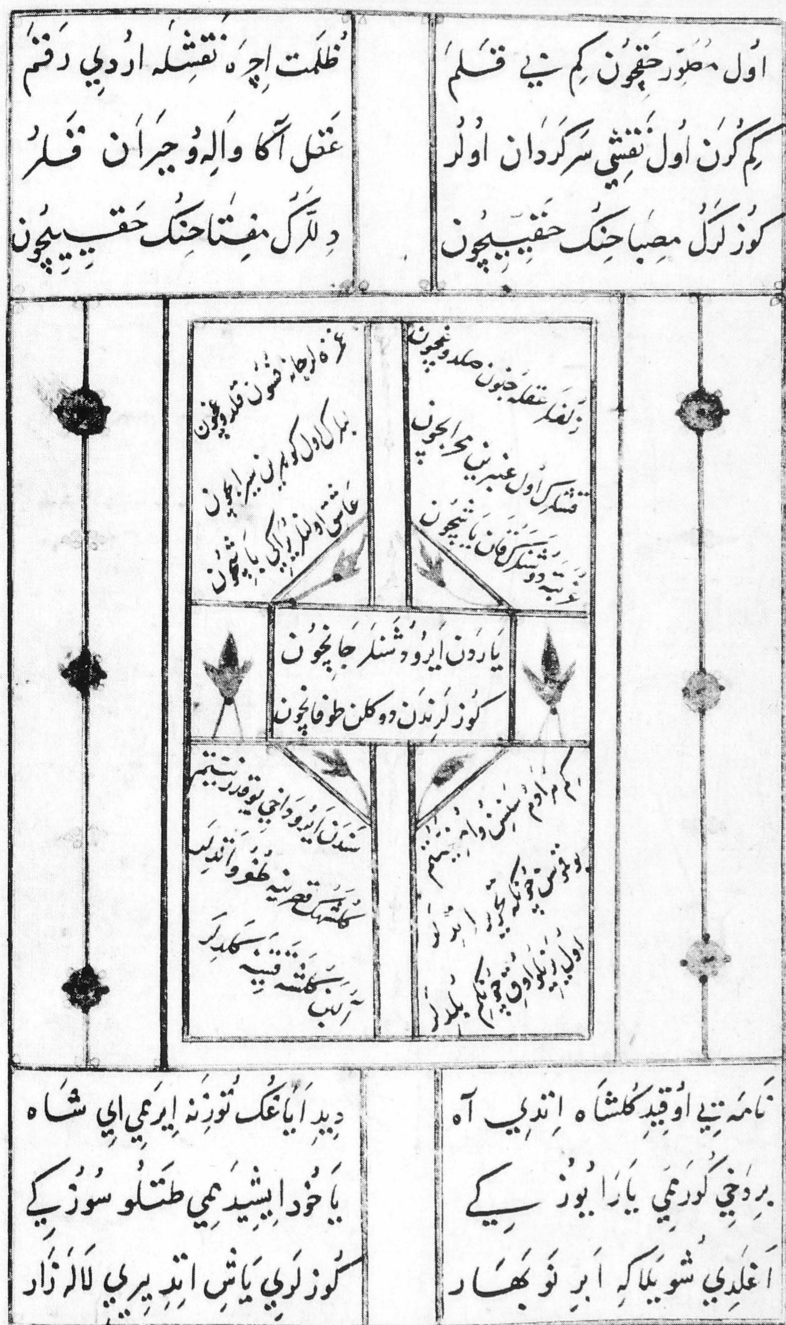


Fig. 1



Fig. 2

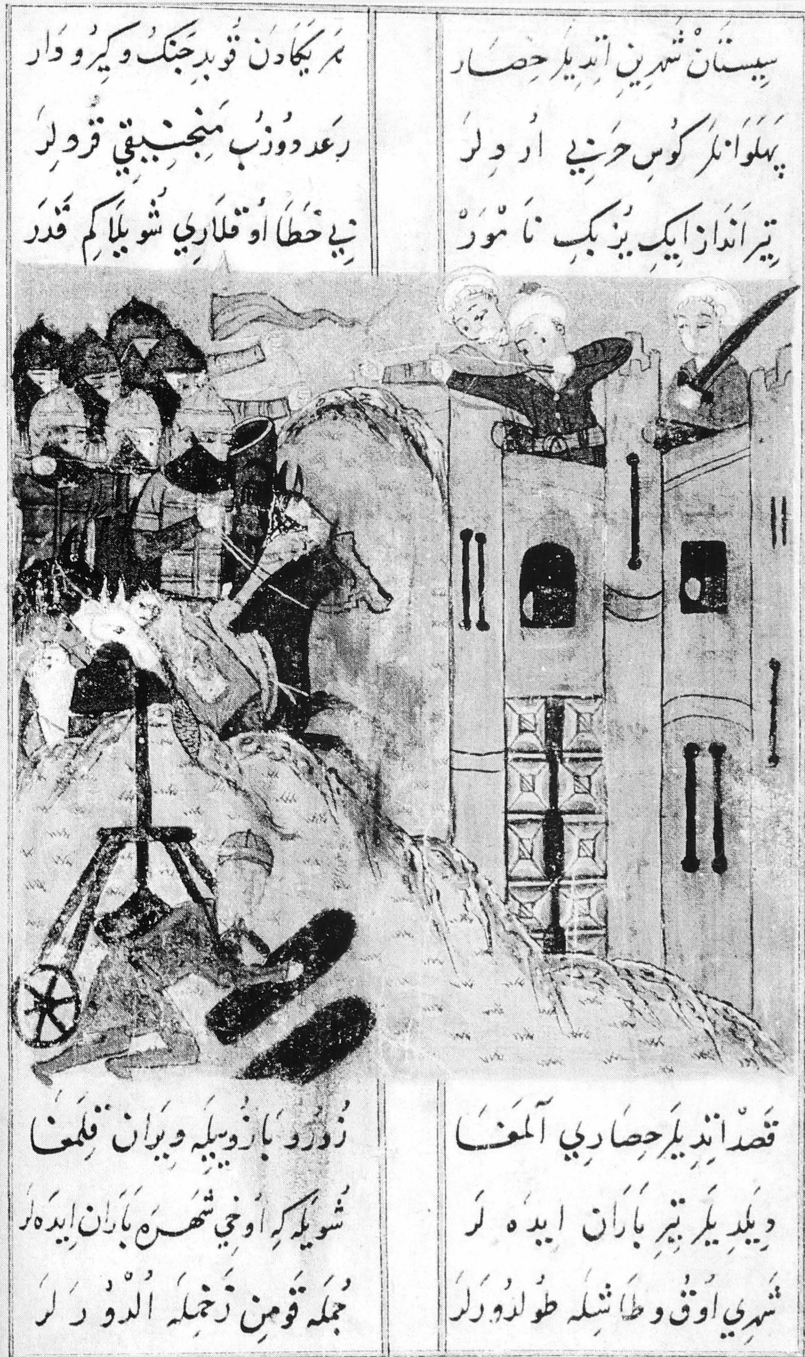


Fig. 3

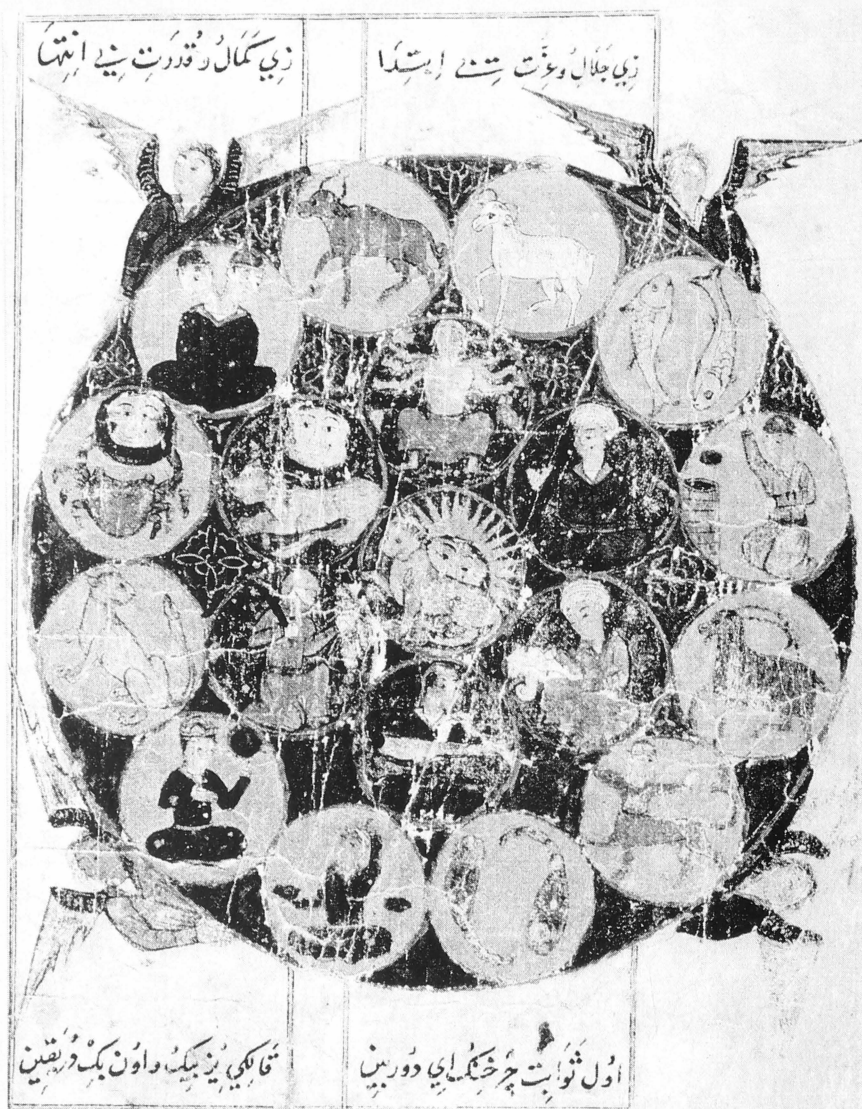


Fig. 4

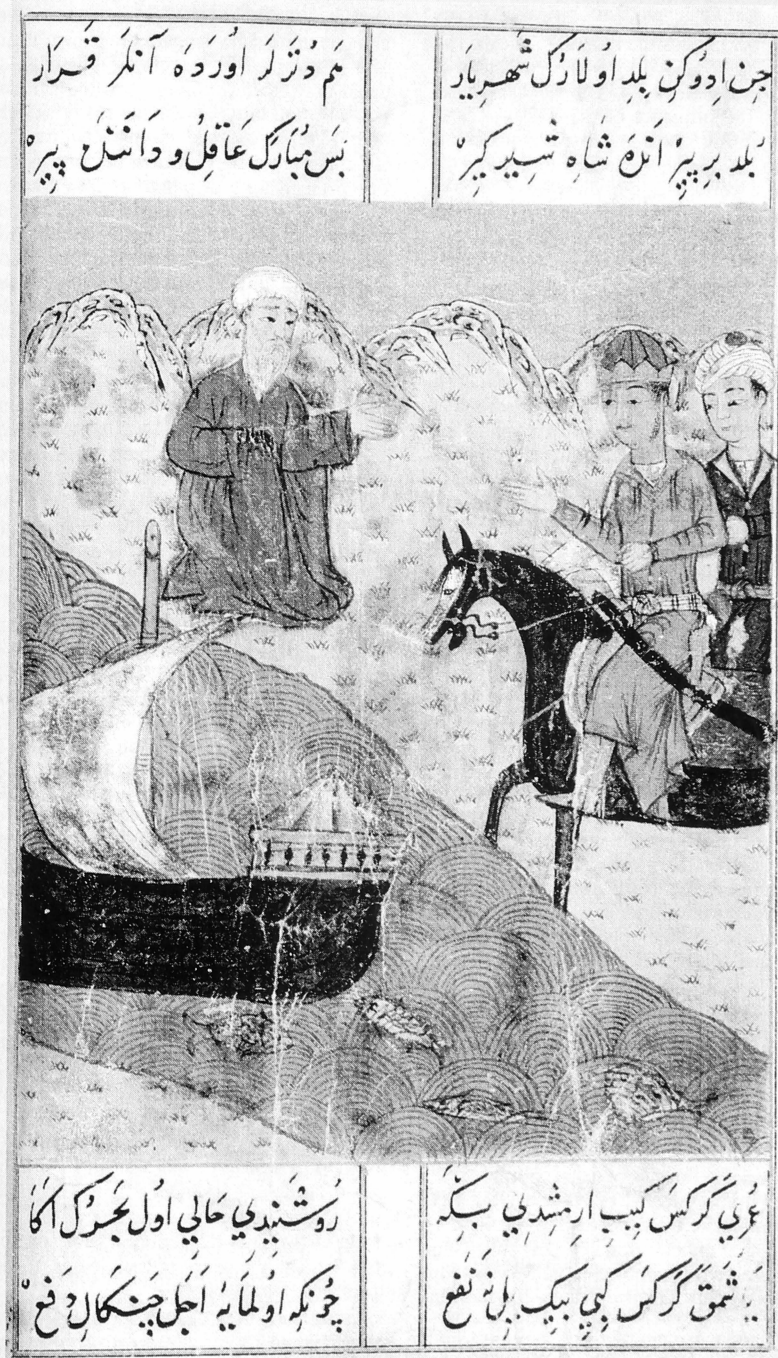


Fig. 5

shown in perspective, as we can see both in Byzantine mosaics and in Byzantine miniatures; it also occurs in the medieval European paintings. One may suggest that the miniaturist was acquainted with European iconographic models.

8) f. 64b (10.7 × 10.7 cm) — the miniature is executed completely in Persian style and depicts the encounter of Iskender with the envoys of Kayd (?). The iconography of the miniature betrays the influence of the Shiraz, Tabriz and Herat styles of painting. Cloaks with parts of fur linings thrown over one shoulder, long sleeves hiding the arms of the envoys, are worth noting in this connection.

9) f. 67b (10.7 × 10.9 cm) — the miniature, depicting the scene of Iskender's encounter with a sage is executed wholly in the Persian style of the late 15th century Timurid painting. One can see a tree in blossom, a flying magpie in the sky, a tent, under which Iskender is sitting on the throne.

10) f. 74a (10.7 × 11.8 cm) — the encounter of Iskender with the same (?) sage is shown in the miniature. The intense yellow of the wise man's scarf over the collar of his blue cloth produces an extremely sharp impression of the intellectual acuteness of their conversation. The miniature depicts an interior. A house with red-tiled roof is also visible. It is the only Ottoman detail in the miniature which as a whole is executed in the Persian style.

11) f. 75b — the miniature represents Macrocosm, shown in the form of a circle with twelve other smaller circles within it along the circumference (fig. 4). The twelve circles are provided with Zodiac signs drawn against gold background. There are another seven inner circles with zodiacal and cabalistic signs and pictures. Four angels are depicted looking out from behind the large circle (two in the upper part of the miniature and two in its lower part). The diameter of the large circle is 14 cm, and of the smaller circles — 2.9 cm.

12) f. 80a (10.7 × 10.9 cm) — a conversation between Iskender and Kayd (?) is depicted in this Persian style miniature, which is not in good condition.

13) f. 81b (10.7 × 10.9 cm) — an artist demonstrating his skill before Iskender. E. Kh. Nuriakhmetov erroneously interpreted it as a scene where Iskender is accepting gifts from Kayd. The miniature is also in bad condition, though one can clearly see, that it is painted in the Persian style.

14) f. 83b (10.7 × 12.3 cm) — a court scene in interior. One can see a musician playing the lute. A throne, its lower part draped, attracts attention. Similar representations of thrones are characteristic, for example, of Ibrahim's Shah-name of the Timurid period [11]. It should be noted that the early Shiraz style of the Timurid epoch reveals itself in the miniatures of our manuscript. One detail, a lying cat in the foreground, reveals its relation to the Tabriz miniature models. Images of cats appear in the 14th century Tabriz paintings, as we can observe it, for example, in some miniatures of the Demotte Shah-name [12]. But this may be not a direct influence. It could come through the Shiraz school of painting, which borrowed a lot from the Muzaffarid and Jalayirid school of book illumination.

15) f. 84b (10.7 × 10.9 cm.) — the miniature depicts a hunting scene. Iskender is shown hunting lions. There is nothing remarkable in the miniature painted in the Persian style. But it lacks the refined manner of drawing characteristic of the Persian school. Its range of colors is not so

wide. The form of the tree depicted in this painting may deserves special attention. It has a bifurcated blue crown. The miniature is damaged.

16) f. 85b (10.7 × 14.6 cm) — another hunting scene. One can see Iskender striking a snow leopard. Gazelles and one more snow leopard are shown nearby. The miniature is executed in the classical Persian style. Only one detail is worth mentioning. I mean a tree that is depicted with one half of its crown painted green while the other is blue. Here, as one can assume, the artist tried to produce the chiaroscuro effect, which betrays his knowledge of the European manner of painting. One detail of the painting reveals its Ottoman origin. In the left upper corner of the miniature a dog's head is visible along with the figures of huntsmen. It represents a special kind of hunting-dog, very large, of white and black color. Similar dogs appear later in a miniature depicting Sultan Bayezid's hunt, in the late 16th century manuscript of Lokman's "Hüner-name" [13]. The miniature is in a bad condition.

17) f. 89b (10.7 × 13.2 cm) — the miniature shows a battle of Iskender with an army of the Indian king Fur. The miniature is executed in the early Timurid style, which served a model for our painter. In the foreground we can see scattered members of slaughtered warriors, a usual element when battles are depicted in the Timurid Shiraz and Herat paintings of the 15th—16th centuries. Only one detail, a very special manner of depicting the draped edges of cloaks worn by the main personages, is remarkable.

18) f. 93b (10.7 × 13.2 cm) — Iskender is depicted slaying a dragon (see plate 1 on the back cover). Iskender is sitting in a carriage and is ready to strike the dragon which, meanwhile, is swallowing a horse. The picture produces the impression of reality, because the carriage and the horse are depicted with much detail, half of the horse disappearing in the dragon's mouth. The gesture of Iskender, lifting his hand with a sword in it, also adds certain liveliness and spontaneity to the picture. Another detail, attracting attention, are the nails, fastening crossbeams in the upper part of the carriage. It may be worth mentioning that the two large wheels of the carriage have one 7 and the other 8 spokes. The general impression is that the miniature was executed by the Ottoman painter.

19) f. 100b (10.7 × 13.2 cm) — the miniature shows the arrival of Iskender at the Ramini island (fig. 5). There, as the story goes, Iskender had an encounter with an old hermit, who is depicted sitting by the shore. The representation of a ship is most interesting detail in this miniature. The ship has a European-fashion rostrum. It seems that the miniaturist has depicted the ship, modeling it on the real Turkish vessels. It must be added that the ship, because of its rostrum and sails blown by the wind, looks vivid.

20) f. 119b (10.7 × 15.3 cm.) — a battle scene (see fig. 6). It depicts Iskender's fight with an army of the ruler of Kashmir. The miniature reveals the Persian miniature style of the Timurid period. There are no Ottoman detail but the way the edges of the clothes of the main mounted personages are depicted.

21) f. 121b (10.7 × 13.2 cm) — the miniature represents Iskender's encounter with strange semi-human monsters. They have elephant's and dog's heads. The influence of the Persian iconography of the subject is evident.

22) f. 130b (10.7 × 15.6 cm) — a battle between Iskender's army and the army of monsters is depicted in

the miniature executed in the classic Persian style. The miniature is in a bad condition.

23) f. 131b (10.7 × 15.6 cm) — the miniature depicts a fantastic scene where a gin sitting on Iskender's shoulders is being slain by an angel. The Persian-style miniature is damaged.

24) f. 140b (0.7 × 14.3 cm.) — the miniature (see *plate 2* on the back cover), executed after the Persian classical models, shows two persons talking. One of them holds a cup of wine in his hand. The miniature illustrates the section titled "Münadjat" ("The Night Prayer"), which is a lyrical digression of the author — Ahmedi. It is possible to suggest that the poet Ahmedi is shown here talking with his night guest. This miniature, in which only one detail betrays its Ottoman origin, that is a picture of a house with a red-tiled roof, is executed in the classical manner with many borrowings from Persian models. For this reason it looks very Persian, even refined. The dark blue sky with gold stars and a crescent greatly strengthens this impression.

25) f. 146b (10.7 × 15.6 cm) — the siege of Farayn by Iskender's troops is shown. The miniature depicts a fortress and warriors on its walls and around it. Three mountain ridges, among which the fortress with narrow arrow-slits is visible, are producing the impression of reality. The Ottomans often besieged mountain fortresses when they were conquering the Balkans. The warriors besieging the fortress are shown clad in short cloaks reaching their knees. The realism of the miniature falls well within the Ottoman tradition of realistic miniature-painting.

26) f. 147b (10.7 × 13.0 cm) — the subject of this miniature is the imaginary execution of Kaydafa's son Kandarush. The miniature is of little interest but for one detail, a special kind of drapery covering the lower part of the throne. It is borrowed from the early Timurid miniature-painting of Shiraz, as has been already mentioned.

27) f. 150b (10.7 × 13.3 cm) — this miniature is wholly executed in the Persian style. It depicts the reception of Iskender by Kaydafa. The story goes that Iskender came to Kaydafa disguised as an envoy expecting not to be identified by her. But Kaydafa showed Iskender his portrait, thus giving him to understand that she knew who he was. One detail of the picture is worth mentioning. This is the figure of a servant who holds a beautifully draped piece of red cloth (a present to Kaydafa?).

28) f. 157b (10.7 × 15.9 cm) — the miniature (see *fig. 7*) shows an encounter of Iskender's ship with some other ship. The way the ships are depicted is very realistic. Not only the "Ottoman" rostra of the ships are shown, but also their planks. The sails of the ships are taken in. The picture of the ships' encounter is emphasized by a special manner the ships are arranged. One more detail is worth mentioning. I mean the image of a tree, bending under the wind — one more realistic detail. Obviously the painter wished to show that the weather was stormy. Finally, the miniaturist depicted the sailors of one of the ships (the one on the left) wearing tall red caps, similar to those worn by the Ottoman sailors — azebes. Thus the painter created a fantastic situation admitting the possibility of Iskender's ship meeting one of the Ottoman navy. Such situation might, however, seem natural for a medieval man with his very special understanding of time and space, especially when illustrating a work of literature. In our opinion, the miniature was executed by the Ottoman painter.

29) f. 168b (10.7 × 13.3 cm) — the miniature executed after a Persian model represents the false king Zakhhak. The miniature is in a bad condition.

30) f. 176a (10.7 × 13.0 cm) — the hero of the Persian epic, Siyavush, making his last arrangements with Farangis, is depicted. Farangis wears a very peculiar tall gold headgear with a short transparent veil behind, reaching her shoulders. This headgear looks very Ottoman, or even European (such kind of transparent veils behind a headgear were in fashion in the late 15th century), although it is difficult to find out any other Ottoman detail in Farangis' dress, as well as in this Persian-style miniature as a whole.

31) f. 184b (10.7 × 13.1 cm) — this Persian-style miniature depicts the famous combat between Isfandiyar and Rustem. Like in other miniatures illustrating this subject, Isfandiyar is shown striking Rustem, his sword piercing Rustem's eye. The miniature is in a bad condition.

32) f. 242a (10.7 × 13.3 cm) — king Ashraf and his daughter. The attitude of the woman is strikingly natural and realistic. She sits bending her right knee and coupling her arms over it. The style of the miniature is Persian.

33) f. 249b (10.7 × 14.7 cm) — this miniature (see *plate 3* on the back cover) illustrates the section of the poem dealing with the history of the Ottoman dynasty. It depicts the Ottoman ruler Orkhan (1324—1362), sitting on a throne encircled by his retinue. The headgears of the personages draw special attention. These tall red and white caps, which we have seen in some other miniatures, present a peculiar replica of the Ottoman caps known from history, though it should be admitted that they differ slightly from those that one can see in later indisputably Ottoman paintings. The painter of this miniature was probably familiar with the real history of the Ottoman state. In this case the artist was most probably representing a religious dispute. Two groups of people are shown in the foreground, sitting against each other. Their gestures reveal the subject of the scene. It is known, that Orkhan was greatly interested in the matters of religion. According to the historical tradition, he was an ardent propagandist of Islam in his lands. He was an organizer of many religious disputes with representatives of other creeds [14]. One detail is notable in this miniature — the enlarged figures of the personages standing on both sides of the Ottoman ruler, who sits under a tent. The miniature is most probably executed by the Ottoman miniaturist, though Persian influence can be easily seen.

34) f. 254a (10.7 × 14.3 cm) — the miniature (see *plate 4* on the back cover), which was formerly interpreted by E. Kh. Nuriakhmetov as Murad's encounter with Christians, is, in fact, an illustration of a well known historical episode — the murder of the Ottoman ruler Murad I (1362—1389) by a Serb soon after the battle of Kosovo (1389). In our manuscript it is the most original miniature. Murad, with his bodyguards and courtiers behind him, is depicted being stabbed by a personage clad in a very peculiar garment. The long sleeve of his cloak has a little opening for a hand. His headgear is very similar to those which we see in the Ottoman miniatures of the 16th century representing Ottoman mounted warriors, originating from the European part of the Ottoman state — Rumeli [15]. The murderer is shown piercing Murad's heart with his sabre. All figures are enlarged. No other miniatures of this kind, depicting the murder of this Ottoman

ruler, are known in the manuscripts of Ahmedi's "Iskender-nâme" from the St. Petersburg manuscript collections. One can assume that the miniature has been executed by the Ottoman painter.

35) f. 256b (10.7 × 13.3 cm) — the Ottoman ruler Suleyman (1402—1410) is presented in this Persian-style miniature. Suleyman is shown sitting on a throne under a tent, encircled by his courtiers and bodyguard. A house with brown tiled roof is an Ottoman element in the picture. There is some disproportion between the sitting and standing figures.

36) f. 264b (10.7 × 13.3 cm) — the miniature (see fig. 8) shows Iskender paying a visit to a monk in a monastery. The monastery, depicted in a realistic manner, with a brown tiled roof and a domed tower, bears a striking resemblance to its real prototype — the Byzantine church. The windows of the domed tower and of the main part of the monastery are shown in perspective. This image creates an impression that the painter copied it from some real architectural form. The enlarged figures of Iskender and of the monk, who is dressed wholly in black, contribute to the expressiveness of the picture. The monk's figure was erased by one of the Muslim readers of the manuscript. The miniature is most likely executed by the Ottoman miniaturist.

37) f. 268a (10.7 × 17.4 cm) — the miniature (see fig. 9) was interpreted by E. Kh. Nuriakhmetov as a representation of the mysterious 'Ad people, mentioned in the Qur'an [16]. Most probably, however, it illustrates one of the fantastic episodes of the poem, telling about Iskender's visit to the Ka'aba. The picture of the Ka'aba, covered with special black cloth — *kiswa*, on its both sides there are Turkish minarets with pointed roofs, is looking not Persian, but Ottoman. The windows of the minarets, as well as their masonry are distinguishable. One more detail is worth mentioning: arrow-slits in the wall of the fortress. They are drawn in perspective. In the left upper part of the miniature one can see the figures of Iskender and of his servant, offering a sacrifice (a sheep with its neck cut, blood pouring from it). A group of half-naked and bare-headed people watching the sacrifice is seen on the left. The miniature is most evidently executed by the Ottoman master.

38) f. 278a (10.7 × 13.0 cm) — the miniature depicts Iskender visiting the tomb of a celebrated warrior, who won many victories and conquered many lands. There is nothing unusual in depicting a tomb pavilion rested on four pillars but for one striking detail: the representation of a quiver with arrows, a sword and a water-skin (?) belonging to the buried man, hanging on the pillars of the tomb. These pagan details are of much interest. They demonstrate the fact that the painter considered it important to reflect the historical practice of the remote past. At the same time it is known from the Turkish history of the Seldjukid period, that some of the most celebrated Turkish military leaders were buried together with their garments and arms [17]. This miniature was most probably executed by the Ottoman painter.

39) f. 280a (10.7 × 14.2 cm) — prophet Hizr drawing the water of life from a spring with his jug. This picture was meant to illustrate futility of man's hope to find immortality, which only prophet Hizr was able to attain. This is the principal idea of the poem. The image of Hizr draws special attention, since he is depicted dressed in a short red

European-fashion cloak fastened on the neck, with a gold nimbus of sanctity around his head. This image is very similar to the images of Christian saints as they are presented in Byzantine mosaics and miniature painting. This miniature was, most probably, also painted by the Ottoman miniaturist.

40) f. 284a (10.7 × 13.2 cm) — mourning over Iskender. Many features are borrowed from Persian prototypes — it was one of the most popular subject in the East. The relation to the previous iconography of the scene in pre-Timurid and early Timurid miniature painting is evident. Unfortunately, the figures of those who are lamenting over Iskender on the right, are damaged by moisture. The miniature was most probably executed by a painter working in the Persian manner.

The analysis of the miniatures of our manuscript brings us to the conclusion that they were painted by two masters who worked, most probably, at the Ottoman court atelier in the second half of the 15th century, — by that time the mature Ottoman style of miniature painting had not yet been formed. It is proved by signs of Byzantine influence, as well as by many Ottoman features reflected in our miniatures.

One of the artists, who painted the miniatures of our manuscript, was evidently intimately acquainted with the earlier Persian iconography and worked in the Persian style, using the achievements of the early 15th century Timurid school of miniature painting, which had borrowed much from the Muzaffarid and Jalayirid painting. The second artist worked in the same manner, being also acquainted with the Persian models. His brush, however, was less refined but more vivid. One can see that both painters enjoyed much more artistic freedom than the Ottoman miniaturists of the 16th century, wholly influenced by the refined painting style flourishing under the Safawi dynasty. It is well known, that after the wars of the Ottoman ruler Selim I (1512—1520) with the Safawi state, many Persian painters were brought to Istanbul and continued to work there as court painters.

The style of our miniatures reflects a very special period in the development of the Ottoman painting, when its own original manner was emerging. It can be clearly observed, in spite of the presence of many features borrowed from more refined and mature Persian samples. It has been already mentioned, that in our miniatures the early Herat and Shirazi styles are especially perceptible. It is, however, difficult to find out the exact samples of Persian painting which influenced the late 15th century Ottoman miniatures. Artists working in the Ottoman state in the 15th century were well acquainted not only with the Timurid painting, but also with the European manner, — mainly through intermediary of Byzantine art. We have some information on the arrival of a group of Central Asian artists at the Ottoman court in the 15th century, as well as on the visit of Gentile Bellini, an Italian painter from Venice, to the court of the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II (1451—1489) [18].

Many elements of our miniatures testifying their Ottoman provenance re-appear in the later Ottoman painting of the 16th and 17th centuries, which became more mature and exquisite. But the Persian influence seems to be no less considerable. It is very likely that the originality of the early Ottoman miniature painting was the result of the work of many painters of European origin, who contributed



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

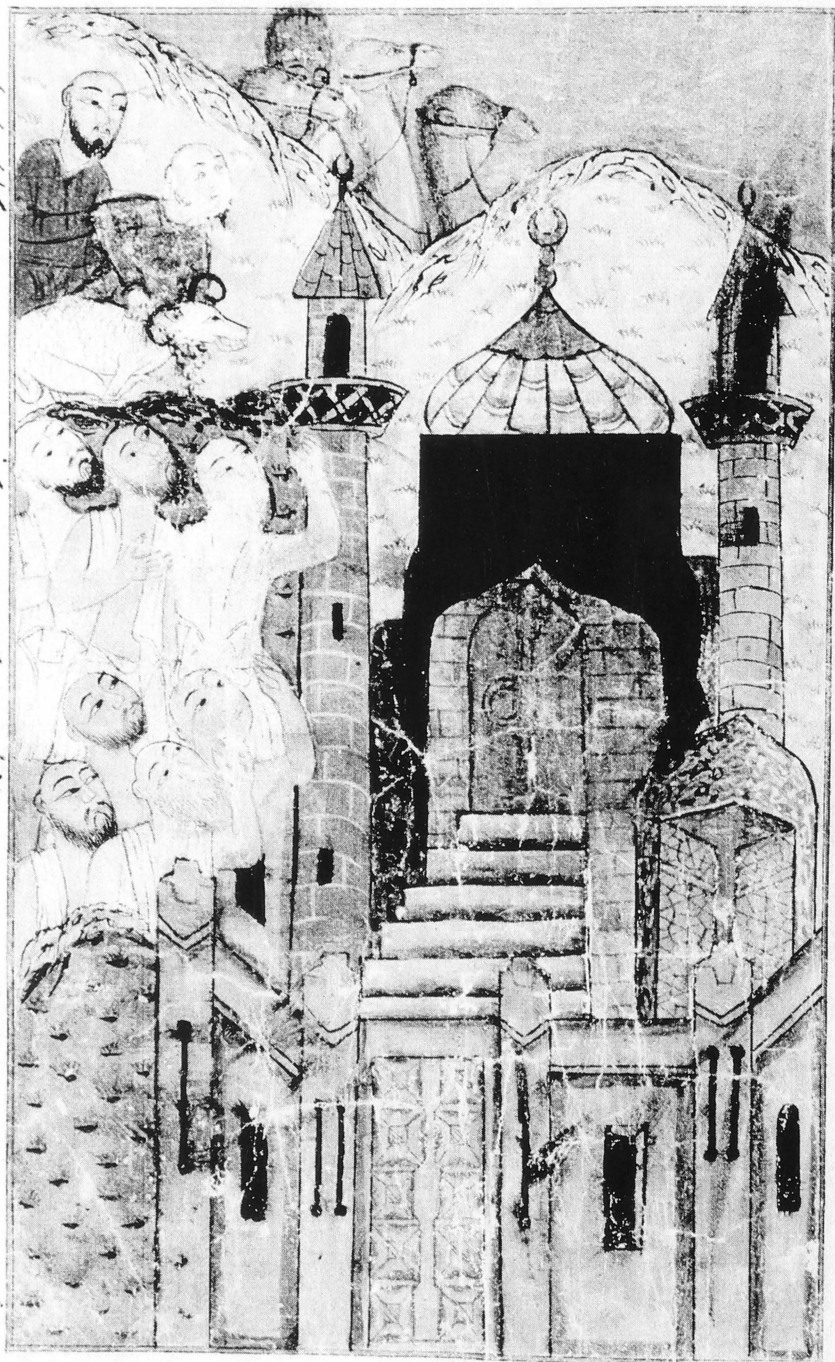


Fig. 9

much to the development of the Ottoman art, creating a strangely attractive mixture of two different styles, the European and the Oriental one. The miniatures of the manuscript of "Iskender-nâme" by Ahmedi which is preserved in the collection of St. Petersburg, represent the most interesting stage of the Ottoman art. Their style is marked by a charming simplicity and naive realism, which

almost wholly disappear in the 16th century. What was considered imperfect by the contemporaries, who highly appreciated the refined Persian art of miniature applies to the artistic taste of a modern observer, who finds a strange beauty in the disproportional and enlarged figures in these miniatures, with their limited pallet and barren landscapes creating the feeling of space.

Notes

1. About Ahmedi and his works see, W. Björkman, "Die altosmanischen Literatur. Die klassisch-osmanische Literature", *Philologiae Turcaicae Fundamenta*, ii (Wiesbaden, 1965), pp. 417—9; T. Kortantamer, *Leben und Weltbild des altosmanischen Dichters Ahmedi unter Besonderer Berücksichtigung seines Diwans* (Freiburg, 1973); N. S. Banarlı, "Ahmedi ve Dâsitân-ı tevarih-i mulûk-i Alî Osman", *Türkiyat Mecmuası* VI (1939), pp. 49—176; I. Ünver, *Ahmedi. Iskender-nâme* (Ankara, 1983).
2. The manuscript is preserved in Bibliothèque National de Paris (Suppl. turc 309), see G. M. Meredith-Owens, *Turkish Miniatures* (London, 1969), p. 30, also M. And, *Turkish Miniature Painting. The Ottoman Period* (Ankara, 1974), p. 15.
3. M. And, op. cit., p. 15.
4. *Vers L'Orient...* (Paris, 1983), p. 12.
5. See M. Götz, *Türkische Handschriften*, ii (Wiesbaden, 1968), no. 488.
6. MS B 277 from the collection of the St. Petersburg branch of the Institute of Oriental studies, f. 259a. It was acquired from N. P. Kondakov in 1900.
7. See *De Bagdad à Ispahan. Manuscrits islamiques de la Filiale de Saint-Petersbourg de l'Institut d'Etudes orientales, Académie des Sciences de Russie* (Catalogue d'exposition à Musée du Petit Palais. 14 octobre 1994—8 janvier 1995) (Milan, 1994), p. 209.
8. O. Aslanapa, "The art of bookbinding", *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia. 14th—16th centuries*, ed. B. Gray (London, 1979), pp. 66, 70, 76, 78, 80, 85; see also M. Aga-Oglu, *Persian Bookbindings of the Fifteenth Century* (Ann Arbor, 1935), p. 3; *Obraztsy Kaligrafii Irana i Srednei Azii XV—XIX vv.* (Samples of calligraphy of Iran and Central Asia in the 15th—19th centuries), eds. I. A. Orbeli, A. N. Boldyrev and A. L. Troitskaia (Moscow, 1963), p. 7.
9. See, e. g. D. T. Rice, *The Art of Byzantium* (London, 1959), pp. 20, 80.
10. G. M. Meredith-Owens, "A copy of the Rawzat al-Safâ with Turkish miniatures", *Painting from Islamic Lands*, ed. R. Pinder-Wilson (Glasgow, 1969), p. 112.
11. S. Walzer, "The Topkapu Saray manuscript of the Persian Kalila wa-Dimna (dated A.D. 1413)", *Painting from Islamic Lands*, pp. 78—9.
12. See, e. g. O. Grabar, "Notes on the iconography of the "Demotte" Shâh-nâma", *Painting from Islamic Lands*, p. 41.
13. M. And, *Turkish Miniature Painting. The Ottoman Period* (Istanbul, 1982), p. 61.
14. See, e. g. G. M. Prokhorov, "Prenie Grigoriia Palamy's khiony i turki" (Grigory Palama's dispute with "Hions and Turks"), *Trudy Otdela Drevnerusskoi Literatury XXVII* (Leningrad, 1972), pp. 329—69; there is even an assumption, that Sultan Orkhan intended to create some kind of syncretic religion in his state — see N. Tsviatkov, "Kiem vieprosa za taka narechenite iudeistvuvashiti na Balkanite prez Srednite vekove" (On the so-called Judaic-minded in the Medieval Balkans), *Godishnik. Obshtestvena Kulturno-Prosvetna Organizatsiia na Evreite v Narodna Respublika Bielgaria*, godina 21 (Sofia, 1986), p. 54. E. Kh. Nuriakhmetov interpreted this miniature as a picture of Orkhan, encircled by his courtiers and bodyguards, see E. Kh. Nuriakhmetov, "Iskender-name" Akhmedi v rukopisnykh sobraniiaakh Leningrada ("Iskender-nâme" by Ahmedi in the Leningrad Manuscript Collections), *Kratkie soobshcheniia Instituta narodov Azii*, 69 (Moscow, 1965), p. 146.
15. See, e. g. Meredith-Owens, "A copy of Rawzat al-Safâ", p. 114; also K. Hegyi, V. Zimanyi, *Az osman birodalom Europaban* (Budapest, 1986), pl. 50.
16. E. Kh. Nuriakhmetov, "Iskender-name", p. 146.
17. S. Tekindağ, "İzzet Koyunoğlu Kütüphanesinde bulunan Türkçe yazmalar üzerinde çalışmalar I", *Türkiyat Mecmuası*, XVI (İstanbul, 1971), p. 138.
18. On the history of the early Ottoman miniature painting see Meredith-Owens, op. cit.; And, op. cit.; G. Fehérvári, "An illustrated Turkish Khamsa of Nizâmi", *Fifth International Congress of Turkish Art*, ed. G. Fehér (Budapest, 1978), pp. 323—37; N. Titley, "Three recently acquired illustrated Ottoman Manuscripts in the British Library", *Seventh International Congress of Turkish Art*, ed. T. Majda (Warsaw, 1990), pp. 247—52.

Illustrations

Front cover:

fol. 58a. Iskender and Gülshah, 10.7 × 10.9 cm.

Back cover:

Plate 1. Fol. 93b. Iskender slaying a dragon, 10.7 × 13.2 cm.

Plate 2. Fol. 140b. The poet Ahmedi, 10.7 × 14.3 cm.

Plate 3. Fol. 249b. The religious dispute in the presence of Sultan Orkhan, 10.7 × 14.7 cm.

Plate 4. Fol. 254a. The murder of Sultan Murad I, 10.7 × 14.3 cm.

Illustrations in the text of the article

Fig. 1. Fol. 55b. A sample of the manuscript's page illumination, 25.5 × 16.0 cm.

Fig. 2. Fol. 35b. A scene of execution, 10.7 × 10.7 cm.

Fig. 3. Fol. 52b. Besieging of a fortress, 10.7 × 10.9 cm.

Fig. 4. Fol. 75b. The Macrocosm picture, diameter of the large circle is 14 cm.

Fig. 5. Fol. 100b. Iskender's arrival at the Ramini island, 10.7 × 13.2 cm.

Fig. 6. Fol. 119b. Iskender's fight with an army of the ruler of Kashmir, 10.7 × 15.3 cm.

Fig. 7. Fol. 157b. An encounter of the ships in the sea, 10.7 × 15.9 cm.

Fig. 8. Fol. 264b. Iskender paying a visit to a Christian monk in a monastery, 10.7 × 13.3 cm.

Fig. 9. Fol. 268a. Iskender visiting the Ka'aba, 10.7 × 17.4 cm.