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“THE BIRTH OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT”. MINIATURE IN A COPY OF NIZAMI’S *ISKANDARNAMA* (BOOK OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT)

CENTRAL ASIA; 16TH CENTURY

H: 23.5; W: 17.5 CM

An important part of the work of Persian astrologers was to cast horoscopes for newborns. At princely births, one or more astrologers were brought in to foretell the child’s life with the aid of astronomical instruments and measurements.

This illustration lets us witness the birth of Alexander the Great himself. On the right, an experienced astrologist is in the process of casting the future king’s horoscope, and on the left side – in the women’s quarters – Alexander’s seated mother is supported by the midwife while the little boy is wrapped in a cloth. According to historical sources, Alexander den Store was born on the last day of July in the year 356 B.C. – in the sign of Leo.

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