13. Rustam drags the Khâqân from his elephant (155h)

Hostilities continue, in the course of which Rustam defeats Kânîsî. The Tûrânîs continue in doubt as to the identity of the Iranîan champion. The Khâqân sends Humân to the Iranîan camp to propose peace, but Rustam insists that the slayers of Sîyavush must be yielded up. Pirân is then sent to parley; Rustam acknowledges his identity, but continues to demand retribution for the death of Sîyavush. Several combats take place. At length Rustam leads his men towards the Khâqân, who rides a white elephant. Then Rustam declares that the Khâqân’s elephants, his throne of ivory and other jewels will fall to Iran. The Khâqân taunts Rustam and then showers arrows upon him. Rustam unfastens his lasso and unhorses many champions as he approaches the Khâqân. The latter deputes an Iranîan speaker to suggest that, following the death of Kamûs, the men of Chin are no longer inclined to battle. However, though Rustam is willing to spare the Khâqân’s life, he is still intent on acquiring booty. The Khâqân goads his elephant forward and hurls a dart at Rustam. Rustam replies with his lasso:

“When the swift coil from Rustam’s hand had fêd
It wound itself about that worthy’s head”.

The Khâqân is bound, and his possessions delivered to Tûs. This does not bring an immediate end to the warfare, but eventually the Iranîans are victorious.

Rustam gallops from left to right towards the Khâqân, and draws the latter towards him. As Rustam rides towards the elephant, but on a parallel course, his lasso rises in a taut diagonal line to the right; a group of warriors of Iran in the foreground ride a line that is almost parallel to that of the lasso. Others of the Iranîan army are ranged up the left side, the figures drawn rather small; yet others are behind the horizon rock, and obscured to such an extent that they hardly seem connected to the scene. A banner forms a link from middle ground to background. Portions of it are in a chevron pattern, and it bears the legend: al-sulûn al-‘âdî, ‘the just sultan’. The background is rendered in a greenish colour which is, perhaps, insufficiently different from the mid-blue of the sky beyond. The rocky horizon is edged with sequences of small strokes, which lend it a fuzzy appearance. The chamfron of Rustam’s horse has a pronged crest.

The rock style, but not the figure drawing, approximates to that in ‘Iskandar and the hermit’ of the Nişâmi of 1431. The unit of Rustam, the Khâqân, and his elephant recalls that in a drawing, probably intending the same subject, in one of the Diez Albums, and perhaps in part Jalâyirî. A similar unit is used in ‘Combat of Suhrawîd and Gurdâfîd’ (pl. 25). Similarly, the chevroned standard and galloping riders seen from the rear reflect a fourteenth-century Shâhnâmeh page; ‘Manûshîh defects Tûr’, in a Topkapı Album. It thus seems possible that an older artist has here been permitted to demonstrate what he can do.
14. The div Akvān lifts the sleeping Rustam (165b)

Kay Khusrau is taking his ease in a flower garden with his paladins, when a herdsman comes to report that a powerful wild ass is harrying and killing his horses. The king understands that this is no normal wild ass and he sends Rustam out to combat a div. Rustam spends three days in fruitless search, and then is twice foiled by the div’s sudden disappearance. At length he rests by a spring, unsaddling Rakhsh and placing the saddle beneath his head. The div Akvān approaches:

‘To take him up, the earth he cut around, And heaved him high above the level ground’.

Rustam awakes in consternation. The div asks him whether he would rather be thrown on to the mountainside or into the sea. Preferring the sea, Rustam asks for the mountainside, and the div duly gives him the opposite to his request. As he falls Rustam draws his sword, and so is able to defend himself against the monsters in the water, while swimming with his left arm. He comes to shore and gives thanks to God. Rustam returns to the spring but Rakhsh is no longer there. He goes in search of Rakhsh and at dawa finds him in the midst of a herd of Afrāsiyāb’s horses, whose herdsman is asleep. Rustam lassos Rakhsh and begins to round up the other horses. The herdsman wakes, but, when Rustam has killed his assistants, he takes to flight. Afrāsiyāb, coming to view his horses, is told what Rustam has done; he gives pursuit but is also driven off. Having returned to the spring, Rustam again encounters Akvān; he lassos him and smashes his brains out. Rustam drives the herd to Kay Khusrau.

The great purple needle of rock gains particular emphasis from being drawn partly in the margin. It signals drama and danger, but more specifically suggests the height from which Rustam will fall, while its curving lower outcrop gives him a splash that he will make into the sea. The vertiginous effect of the rock is complemented by the steeply angled horizon, above which Rustam is held, his situation in every way precarious. The shoreline is angled to match the horizon — it is as though the painter foreknew the effect of banking in a light aircraft. The sea, which would have been lighter before its silver pigment tarnished, contains several eager-looking monsters. It is, however, the main action that draws attention back to itself, framed as it is between the text panel and the pinnacle of rock. There is an absolute contrast between the relaxation of Rustam, sleeping on his saddle, and the gleeeful concentration of the div as it picks its way towards the cliff edge.

The gold of the rulings shows through the rock pinnacle, demonstrating that the later was not part of an agreed scheme, and thus suggesting that its use was an inspiration of the individual artist. Abdullaeva and Melville draw attention to the similarity in the depiction of rock of this and the same scene in Ibrahim’s Shihnaizah, which also contains a slanted horizon and a similar fish. Since the figure drawing and the conception of the scene are very different, there seems no possibility that the same painter created both, but since the rock mode is very similar it would seem that the Herat painter must have had access to the Shiraz painting. It thus appears that Ibrahim’s manuscript had been brought to Herat.
Reports come to near the borders by wild boar. Bizhn problem, accom- boars while Gurgn this will not rede to lead Bizhan int should continue to flowers that is fre of Afrasiyab, and some damsels. Bizhn jewels and goes f him and is smitte days of revelry. M takes him to the j delight follow. Afrasiyab, has Bizhn tells him that he fairy. Afrasiyab se warns that this m killing of Siyavus thrown into a pit Manzhah is cast o Bizhan with food.

Gurgn return was led to his dog of a wild ass, in m appears guilty to him. At New Year and takes the See describes him in a Kay Khusrn sur to rescue Bizhan, plead his case wit with seven paladi disguised as merc Pirn. Manzhah - Iran, he gives her signet ring in it. I night has fallen, M gni: Rustam to seven companion cannot; Rustam p away. He requires Gurgn for his pa agrees this.

"Downwards
And drew him
bound w
Bizhan is naked at his lodging, wher Rustam and Bizhn
15. Rustam rescues Bizhan from the pit (180a)

Reports come to court that the fields of Irmān, near the borders of Tūrān, are being devastated by wild boar. Bizhan goes to deal with the problem, accompanied by Gurgin. Bizhan kills boars while Gurgin hangs back. Gurgin fears that this will not redeem to his credit, and he decides to lead Bizhan into danger. He suggests that they should continue towards Tūrān to a meadow of flowers that is frequented by Manizhah, daughter of Afrasiyab, and her attendants, and carry off some damseels. Bizhan arrays himself with his jewels and goes forward alone. Manizhah sees him and is smitten with love; they enjoy three days of revelry. Manizhah then drugs him and takes him to the palace of Afrasiyab. Days of delight follow. Afrasiyab learns of this and, furious, has Bizhan brought before him. Bizhan tells him that he was carried to Manizhah by a fairy. Afrasiyab sentences him to be hanged. Pirān warns that this may cause the same trouble as the killing of Siyavush. In consequence, Bizhan is thrown into a pit, which is closed with a stone. Manizhah is cast out, but permitted to feed Bizhan with food that she gets by begging.

Gurgin returns to Iran. His story that Bizhan was led to his doom by the White Div in the form of a wild ass, is not believed by Giv, and he also appears guilty to Kay Khusrau, who imprisons him. At New Year, Kay Khusrau prays to Ormazd and takes the Seeing Cup to look for Bizhan: he describes him in a pit, but attended by a princess. Kay Khusrau summons Rustam from zabulistan to rescue Bizhan. Gurgin prevails on Rustam to plead his case with Kay Khusrau. Rustam travels with seven paladins, among whom is Gurgin; disguised as merchants they come to the city of Pirān. Manizhah comes to Rustam for news of Iran; he gives her food for Bizhan and puts his signet ring in it. Bizhan is much cheered. When night has fallen, Manizhah lights a great fire to guide Rustam to the pit. Rustam instructs his seven companions to move the stone, but they cannot; Rustam prays for strength and heaves it away. He requires Bizhan to say that he forgives Gurgin for his part in these events, and Bizhan agrees this.

'Downwards the royal lash Rustam let fall,'
And drew him forth, his feet still bound withal'.

Bizhan is naked and wasted. Rustam takes him to his lodging, where Gurgin prostrates himself. Rustam and Bizhan attack the palace of Afrasiyab; the latter escapes and flees, but returns with an army. The forces of Iran and Tūrān fight. Victorious, the Iranians return to Kay Khusrau and are feasted.

The scene is very romantic. Night is indicated by a plethora of stars in the sky and a crescent moon; nevertheless, three pairs of birds, emblematic of love, hover. Trees on the horizon line, both leafy and reduced to sticks, are seen against this background—though the colouristic effect may not be as originally intended, since it appears that the green pigment of the foliage has turned brownish. Manizhah's blue chador draws the viewer's attention: related to the blue of the sky, it asserts that she is central to the tone of this incident. As is usual, the pit is shown in section; it extends into the margin, emphasizing the fact that it is at a remove from the upper ground, but the margin is that of the fore-edge, which usually conveys a sense of freedom rather than confinement. The figure of Bizhan is distinctively modelled and the rock that frames him has looser strokes than is usual in the manuscript; both features result from repainting in India. It may be the intention of the original or o the repainting artist to suggest that Bizhan's gaze is directed towards his love rather than at Rustam, who is about to be his rescuer. Much of the character of this rendering of a fairly frequently treated subject lies in the contrast between these romantic effects and the demeanour of the Iranian warriors. In front of Manizhah, Rustam bends over the pit in a business-like way. Behind him, the seven warriors are carefully differentiated. Their faces seem to say: 'Is this going to work?'; 'I wish I were somewhere else'; 'Mind what you are doing with that mace'; and 'That Bizhan is a lucky man.' In the bottom right, the horses also appear interested.

The figure of Rustam, the watching soldiers, and the night sky are probably derived from the illustration of this subject in Akandar's Anthology Add. 27261. As Soucek has observed, the Muhammad Juki composition is found in a slightly reduced form in a Shāhnāmah datable to the 1450s or 60s and illustrated in an eclectic Turkmen style (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Museum of Art, 1963/1).