

opposite and he would be able to survive. This episode often appears in illustrated *Shahnamehs* because it not only reaffirms the strength and cunning of Rostam but is also humorous and colorful.

20. *Bizhan and the Wild Boars*, fol. 121b.

The David Collection (fig. 28)

One of the subject populations complained to Kay Khusrau that wild boars were destroying their orchards. In response, he sent the young Bizhan to combat them. When Bizhan found them in the forest, he shot them with arrows and then beheaded them. While the boar in the foreground has been shot with arrows, the one next to it has been stabbed or sliced. Bizhan is depicted jamming his dagger into a boar's neck. Although Bizhan had traveled to the forest with Gurgin, Mu'in has included only Bizhan in this painting. Moreover, the forest vegetation found in many illustrations of this episode is absent here, represented by only one tree on the mountain-side.

21. *Rostam Rescues Bizhan from the Pit*.

The Israel Museum, 626.69⁴⁴ (fig. 10)

The Turanian king Afrasiyab ordered Bizhan to be cast into a black pit because Bizhan had been consorting with his daughter, Manizheh. When his plight was discovered by Kay Khusrau, the shah dispatched Rostam to locate and rescue the young Iranian. With the help of Manizheh, who lit a flame near the pit so Rostam could find it at night, Rostam lowered a rope into the pit and Bizhan was pulled to safety. In this painting, Manizheh stands to the side of the flame, veiled and wearing white while Rostam in his customary tiger-skin cuirass and leopard-skin helmet rescues Bizhan as three soldiers observe at the right. This is one of the most popular episodes in the *Shahnameh*, illustrated in fifty known manuscripts from the 17th century alone.

22. *Bizhan Beheads Human*, fol. 136b.

The David Collection (fig. 29)

As the Iranians and Turanians massed for battle, Bizhan fought long and hard against Human. Finally Bizhan bested his foe and beheaded him. Here



Fig. 10. *Rostam Rescues Bizhan from the Pit*. The Israel Museum, 626.69.

Human's head is visible hanging from Bizhan's saddle, ready to be carried back and presented as a trophy to the Iranian army. This scene is very common in illustrated *Shahnameh* manuscripts. However, Bizhan is repeatedly shown in the act of slitting Human's throat, whereas Mu'in has chosen the moment after he has beheaded Human. The compo-