of Dieric Bouts, an artist which survived in a dozen works of art at least, has been eagerly studied with the idea in the mind of the student: which element in these mild and honest works, represents his native heritage?

We hope that this article serves to assure you that the Smith College Museum of Art acquired with the silverpoint by Bouts, a work of art of sublime quality, of timeless beauty, and a work of art of great significance for the student of art. This combination makes it an ideal addition to a college museum.

A. P. A. VORENKAMP

A MOSAIC FROM THE ANTIΟЧ REGION

The mosaic representing Pyramus, the river-god, which was recently added to the permanent collection of the Smith College Museum, was discovered at Seleucia Pieria, ancient seaport of Antioch, during the course of the excavations carried on in that region by the Committee for the Excavation of Antioch and its Vicinity. Found in August 1937, the Smith College mosaic is being studied at the present time and will be included in volume III of the catalogue of the mosaics and sculpture published for the committee by Princeton directed the expedition, in which they were joined by Les Musées Nationaux de France, the Baltimore and Worcester Art Museums and later Dumbarton Oaks, affiliated with the Fogg Museum of Art. Campaigns were carried on from 1932 to 1938.

Discoveries made by the expedition have taught the art world many new and important things about Near Eastern painting in late antiquity. The dominant role played by Syria and its luxurious metropolis of Antioch as artistic and cultural arbiter of the entire East, during the later Roman Empire, is amply proved. By means of the hundreds of mosaics discovered, it is now possible to trace the many gradual changes that came over the Hellenistic style of painting from the first century until its complete orientalization by the sixth century. Gaps that existed in our knowledge of painting, particularly during the second, third and fourth centuries have been filled.

* * *

**The Smith College Museum was fortunate in securing from Princeton University one of the earlier mosaic fragments of the long and brilliant series uncovered. It formed a panel of the pavement-decorated of the triclinium or dining-room of a house, built on a sloping hillside which overlooked the harbor. The magnificent vista on which the inhabitants of the household looked may be guessed from the photograph of the pavement taken in situ (fig. 4). Seleucia, as well as Antioch and Daphne, appears to have contained many homes of luxury and wealth.**

*Fig. 4. View Showing Pavement in Original Setting*

The house may date from the second century A.D.; further finds from beneath the floor may establish the date more conclusively. The room measured originally about fifteen and one-half by twenty-three feet. About half the pavement has been preserved, the rest lost through erosion.

Of the remaining fragments, the central panel bears a figure inscribed Cilicia, seated beneath the spreading branch of a tree; two corner ones contain medallion busts inscribed Pyramus and Tigris (fig. 5). The central panel appears to have contained four personifications of provinces, each flanked by its appropriate river in the corner medallion. Mr. Campbell of Princeton has suggested that the personifications...
were Cilicia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Babylonia, with the rivers Pyramos, Tigris, Orontes and Euphrates. Panels containing geometric patterns based on hexagonal ceiling coffers were placed between the figure medallions of the corners, and presumably continued along the further end of the room.

The decorative scheme seems to have followed that commonly used in triclinia. Since one entire end and part of the sides of the pavement were covered by the three long couches upon which the diners reclined, most of the figure decoration was lavished upon the remaining T-shaped area which met the gaze of the diners. Simple geometric patterns sufficed to pave the areas obscured by the couches. This method of design—interspersing geometric patterns between figure decorations—although destined to be superseded later by a more intricate and comprehensive composition of the floor as a unit, possessed a clarity and logic which were in complete accord with the earlier Greek tradition. Equally simple are the narrow red borders marking off the geometrical panels and the black ones encircling the busts of the river-gods. Wider bands of gray-green, buff and black frame the central panel, and a two and a quarter inch border of black encloses the entire pavement.

The severity of the circular and geometrical bands surrounding the portrait head of Pyramos contrasts with the impressionistic drawing of the figure and the graceful freedom of the foliate forms. The slender leaves in the river-god's hair, and those in the corner designs which bring the circle to a square, are in tones of gray and olive-green. The more formal bandings are in buff, red, black and white. Red tesserae form the letters of the name.

The figure of Pyramos is rendered with a free naturalism. The easy, three-quarter pose of the head creates an illusion of the third dimension, as do the shadows cast by nose and chin. The shadows fall naturally with no attempt at schematization as in later works. Against a white background, Pyramos is shown as a virile, beardless youth, considerably younger than the bearded Tigris. His chest and right shoulder are undraped; over his left shoulder is a mantle of grayish-green. Flesh tones are rendered in the conventional ruddy-brown reserved for the male.

The condition of the Pyramos panel is excellent. The tesserae of
cubes are of marble and of stone; only a few are missing, around the edges of the hair and garment and in a few places along the border. The tesserae forming the background are fairly uniform in size, most of them just short of a centimeter across, and are laid close together in concentric circles. Within the figure itself, the tesserae vary more in size and shape. Oblong, triangular, and narrow, sinuous pieces are employed, particularly around the eyes and along the planes of the chin and breast (fig. 6). Laying the tesserae along the modelling lines of the drawing gives it greater vigor. A careful gradation of color-tones similarly heightens the illusion of the third dimension, and approximates with amazing closeness the highly impressionistic effect of Roman easel painting. Some mosaic panels of this period, in fact, were easel paintings in the sense that they were made elsewhere, and fitted into their allotted place later.

Further researches made by members of the expedition on the material uncovered in the later excavations at Seleucia and Daphne will disclose more definite information. Literary sources may reveal descriptions closely allied to our pavement-decoration. It may be found that some earlier prototype existed, possibly carved or painted in fresco on some wall since destroyed.

To trace the various personifications of the river-god would form a long study in itself. It might be merely pointed out, however, that the continued use of personification was one of certain pagan habits which persisted in Syria as late as the fifth and sixth centuries. When Greek art, in attempting to assimilate so many new countries during the Hellenistic age, could no longer create gods, it created personifications of nature and of various local features instead.

This geographical type of personification was extremely popular with the Romans. In Syria, as at Rome and Pompeii, provinces, cities, rivers and mountains, were all pictured and carved in human and animal forms and little of the older religious significance remained.

Representations of the river-god himself are legion, and the Pyramos of our mosaic fits into a line of development extending over many centuries. The worship of rivers among the Greeks was very ancient and was never lost even with the advent of the cult of Olympic deities. Later ages erected temples and shrines to their river-gods. Long after most other forms of nature worship had died out, that of the river-god lived on.13

Our delineation of Pyramos as a handsome and vigorous young man has much of the simplicity and dignity associated with Hellenic work. Ancient periods gave to the god the form of a huge bull, a hound, a snake, or a fierce boar. One of the more picturesque of the early versions is on a Sicilian coin of Catania16 (fig. 7) which shows the River Amanas as a human-headed bull. His foreleg is bent as though swimming. A water fowl above him marks the surface of the stream, a fish below him, its depths.

Later ages showed the river-god in human form, and placed a reed or lustral bough within his hand. Pipes suggested the music of his waters. Like Dionysus he held the vine. Other representations gave to him, as to the Earth and Summer season, the sheaf of grain and cornucopia of fertility. The leaves in the hair of Pyramos very probably suggest the

14 "La Syrie Romaine" by M. I. Kostovetzf in *Le Renseignement Hellenique*, vol. clxxviii, 1933, pp. 1-40. Kostovetzfeld stresses the enormous progress made by hellenization, even more than romanization, in Syria during the Roman period. He was one of the earlier scholars to emphasize the importance of Syria, along with Palestine and Transjordan, to the Roman Empire during the first, second and third centuries.


fertility brought by the river to the Cilician plain,¹¹ just as does the sheaf of corn held by the sculptured figure of the Nile in the Vatican. Such a symbol would appear to be more appropriate for our river-god than the torch he holds on the coins of the Cilician city of Hierapolis; the latter may be a play upon the name Pyramus.

One final depiction of the river-god might be mentioned, both because of its connection with Antioch and because of its marked influence on subsequent art. The statue of the Tyche or Fortune of Antioch¹² showed the city-goddess seated upon Mt. Silpius while the river Orontes, a nude youth, seems to swim out strongly from between her feet.¹³ Coins imitated the group¹⁴ (fig. 8) for centuries after, over all Syria and far into Asia. The similar linking of our four river-gods with their corresponding provinces, in the pavement of the hillside villa, must have appealed greatly to the fancy of its Seleucid occupants.

E. H. P.

¹² The Pyramids, like the Nile, carol along so great an amount of soil in its waters in ancient times that prediction decreed it would some day carry six sail clear to Cyprus, a journey lasting several months.
¹³ Made by a sculptor named Iulio, in the early third century, known to us through several copies.
¹⁴ To conceive of a god as swimming in his river, instead of having a soul of a river, was the product of an anthropomorphic age which had come to regard its river-god as a geographical symbol rather than a sacred divinity.

₁⁵ Type of Greek Coins by Percy Gardner. Cambridge, 1933, pl. xv. no. 52. The Tyche of Antioch with a Syrian coin of 485 B.C.

DISCARDED TREASURES BY WILLIAM HARNETT

The Smith College Museum has added to its permanent collection a Discarded Treasures by William M. Harnett,¹⁵ (fig. 9) a once popular and successful artist who has been strangely neglected and all but forgotten by the twentieth century. Only now is Harnett gradually receiving the recognition as one of our most distinguished American artists. But today our interest for his work lies not, as in the late nineteenth century, in its realism per se, but rather in his unusual sensitivity to the beauty of abstract forms and his anticipation of many elements in contemporary painting.

The deceptive reality of his still life, the so-called trompe l'œil, once popular among bar-room habitués, immediately brings to mind the work of the Dutch still life masters. It would be difficult, however, to draw any conclusions in regard to possible influences in this connection. The field of still life, forced upon him by his finances, was used for his paintings until his death in Paris in 1892. Nonetheless, the parallel is interesting and of certain significance. The Dutch art tradition, it will be recalled, is developed out of the miniature painting of early manuscript illustrators. In all probability Harnett's training as an engraver must account in large extent for his technical precision. It is a precision which attains perfection akin to that of the Dutch school, and which is new to the modern school.

In this super-realistic objectivity Harnett anticipates the tantalizing deceptive reality of a Pierre Roche. But the meticulous exactitude of Harnett never remains a mere truism de force. His compositions new contain the surrealistic incongruity of the insistent reality of unreality in our painting the logic of the composition of second-hand books. But here again, his logic as well as his super-realism anticipates the twentieth century. The "to centre" placard and smaller torn leaf so carefully painted that the spectator not only attempt to read it type but to feel the torn edge of the paper, is the nineteenth century forerunner of Picasso's introduction of texture in newspaper collage.

¹⁵ Oil on canvas, 20" high by 40" wide. Signed in lower right W M Harnett. Painted around 1875. Harnett was born in Clonolly, Co. Cork, Ireland, 1848. Brought to America the following year. At 17 became an engraver, working in steel copper, wood and silver. Studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, the National Academy of Design and Cooper Institute in New York. His work is fine, formal and detailed. Since 1881 he traveled and studied in London, Florence, Munich and Paris 1884. Achieved critical popularity both in this country and abroad in the 1830's and 1840's. Died in New York 1892.

The writer is indebted to Mrs. Edna Harnett of the Downtown Galleries for making available the existing material on Harnett.