

# *Bulletin of*

## **THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS OF THE CITY OF DETROIT**

**VOL. XXIII . . . NO. 6  
MARCH . . . . . 1944**



THE ADORATION OF THE KINGS  
BY JACOB CORNELISZ, DUTCH, c.1470-1533  
*Gift of the Ralph H. Booth Fund, 1944*

THE ADORATION OF THE KINGS, BY JACOB CORNELISZ. Thanks to the Ralph H. Booth Fund the Museum has been able to acquire an important work by Jacob Cornelisz (c. 1470-1533), the founder of the Amsterdam school of painting in the early sixteenth century. His leading position at the beginning of a new civic culture at Amsterdam is somewhat similar to that of Lucas at Leiden, although he is less problematic a personality. The two are comparable in industry and many-sidedness: more than fifty paintings by him are known, of which hardly half a dozen are in this country. He painted in oil and water color, he made designs for painted glass and for tapestries, he executed woodcuts, he produced altarpieces, murals, portraits, and the splendid development of portraiture at Amsterdam in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is to a considerable extent due to his and his son's (Dirk Jacobs) achievements.

As Holland was less developed than Flanders at this time, his style is not so refined as that of his contemporaries in Antwerp like Quentin Massys (as a comparison of his *Adoration* with the *St. Magdalene* by Massys in our Museum will demonstrate). But his forcefulness and directness of expression and solidity of linear and color construction made up for the lack of subtlety. Characteristically Dutch are the homely, peasantlike types of the Virgin and the adoring kings, with their bony, workmanlike hands. The warm brown color scheme with strong contrasts of light and shadow from which a deep red and blue stand out in the costumes, presages the style of the great Dutch seventeenth-century masters. The hard, forceful outlines of the figures show a connection with the art of woodcuts of which Jacob Cornelisz was a great master.

The artist painted the subject of the *Adoration of the Kings* more than once; the version formerly in the Stilwell Collection, New York, and another formerly in the Kaufmann Collection in Berlin are well known. The present version, which is unknown in the literature on the artist, is the largest and most beautiful of all and was executed about 1512. It was at that time that Jan Scorel entered the workshop of Jacob Cornelisz and stayed with him as assistant for several years. He is said to have executed some of the landscape backgrounds in his master's paintings. If we compare the *Crucifixion* by Jan Scorel in our Museum with the present *Adoration of the Kings*, we find similar tendencies in developing the distance through linear and aerial perspective. Both Jacob Cornelisz and Scorel are among the first Dutch painters to become aware of the change of local color in receding planes. The rich deep reds of the costumes in the foreground figures become lighter orange and pink in the angels in the air and in the soldiers in the middle distance, while the heavy blue changes into a light blue in similar fashion.

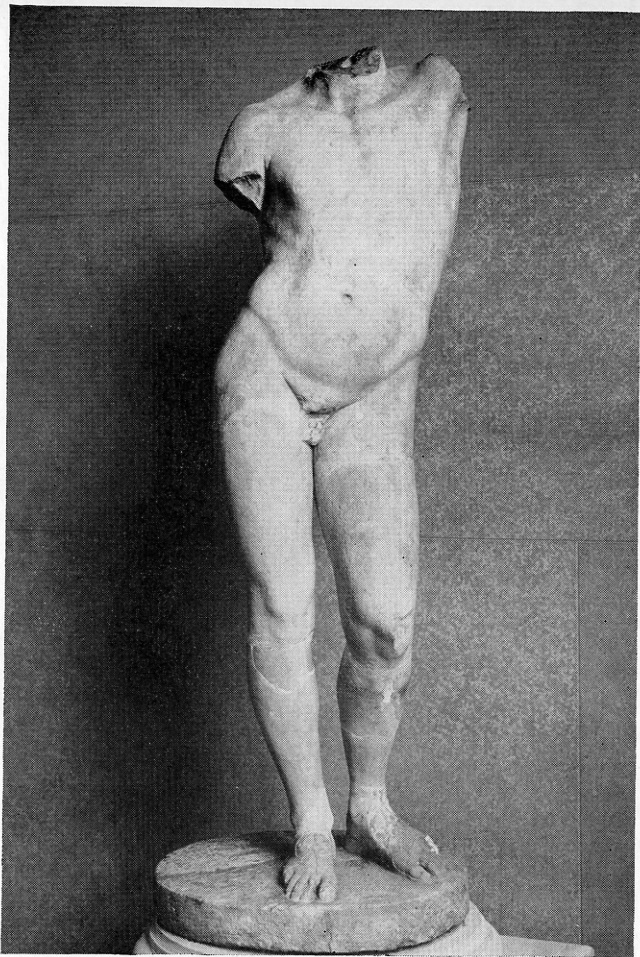
Jacob Cornelisz was born in Alkmaar; the formerly anonymous Master of Alkmaar has been identified as his brother, Cornelis Buys. Both studied at Haarlem where Ouwater and Geertgen tot Sint Jans had founded the foremost school of Dutch painting in the fifteenth century. How closely the schools of painting in Holland are related and interwoven, by the short distances between cities in that small country, is shown by the fact that Jacob Cornelisz was thus connected with the schools of Alkmaar, Haarlem and (through Scorel) Utrecht while the school which he founded at Amsterdam was situated in the geographical center of these.

The newly acquired painting forms an excellent addition to the collection of Flemish and Dutch primitive paintings which is one of the prides of the Detroit Museum. It was shown in Detroit in the exhibition of early Dutch paintings in February, 1944, soon after it had been brought to this country from an English collection, and again in the exhibition of *Five Centuries of Dutch Paintings* in Montreal in April, 1944. (Acc. No. 44.74. H. 51¾; W. 38¾ inches.)



A PALACE SCENE, a South Indian marble relief (H. 25; L. 34 inches) of the third century A. D. from Amarāvātī or Nāgārjunikoṇḍa, is a recent gift of Mr. C. T. Loo to the Indian gallery. The lost stupas of Amarāvātī and Nāgārjunikoṇḍa, were great wonders in the Buddhist world. Like all stupas, they were places of pilgrimage where the Buddhist pilgrim might see the universe on a comprehensible scale and where he could contemplate a "Bible in Stone." The marble slabs covering the stupas of this region were their particular glory for they were elaborately carved in high relief with holy scenes. This new accession provides us with an extremely beautiful fragment of characteristic style and quality. The strength and vigor of the masculine types is mated with the grace and gentleness of the women. These are gods and heroes, their symbolic acts arrested in stone and placed on the world stage for the edification of the knowing. (Acc. No. 43.35).

S. E. L.



A STANDING FIGURE OF A YOUTH, in the style of Praxiteles, the famous Athenian sculptor of the fourth century B. C., is the gift of Mrs. Ralph Harman Booth in memory of her husband, Ralph Harman Booth. The sculpture, fifty-four and one-half inches high, shows the graceful pose, curving line, and softly modeled surface of this artist's style, although the head and arms, one raised, one lowered, are lost, the legs fractured and repaired, and the surface somewhat pitted. The impersonal ideal of the fifth century has given place to the more personal individualization of the fourth century — a truism as observable in the literature, religion, and philosophy of the period as in the arts. Praxiteles was best known in antiquity for his Aphrodite, which attracted many pilgrims and sightseers to Knidos, and his Apollo Sauroktonos, a lithe youth leaning against a tree, teasing a lizard, definitely identified for us in copies on coins, as well as other works less certainly documented but safely attributed on the basis of style, like the world-famed Satyr, of which a copy in the Capitoline Museum in Rome was Hawthorn's "Marble Faun." It was not until 1877, however, that the true beauty of



AN ARMORED GUARDIAN, Chinese, T'ang Dynasty (618-907 A. D.), the gift of Mr. K. T. Keller to the Chinese galleries, was once one of four guardians bearing a gilt reliquary sarcophagus. This gilt bronze figure (Height  $3\frac{3}{8}$  inches), torn from its context, exists now as a synthesis in miniature of the robust and boundless energy of the guardians and warriors of T'ang. The twist of his body and his fearsome aspect are proof of his functions as bearer of holy weight and guardian against evil. (Acc. No. 42.119).

S. E. L.

---

the work of Praxiteles was revealed by the discovery at Olympia in Greece of the statue of Hermes holding the child Dionysos. Relaxed in pose, dreamy in expression, self-contained yet conscious of environment, the figure exemplifies the divine in human form and at the same time the graceful and personalized style of Praxiteles. Beside this original sculpture in marble, attested by Pausanias, the Baedeker of the second century of our era, all other works attributed to Praxiteles are revealed as copies, mostly of Roman date. (Acc. No. 43.480.)

FRANCIS W. ROBINSON.



ROUND-ABOUT OR CORNER CHAIR with legs and splats of the Queen Anne type, a New England piece, about 1730, which has been added to one of the bedrooms of Whitby Hall through the Gibbs-Williams Fund (Acc. No. 43.441).

R. H. T.



MALLARDS, BY WALT KUHN, American, contemporary, acquired from the income of the Merrill Fund. It is a satisfaction to have Walt Kuhn represented in the American collection along with his contemporaries, Henri, Davies, Bellows, Luks, Glackens, Sloan, and other noted painters of his day. *The Mallards*, painted in 1926 at the height of his power, is a departure from the artist's usual theme of the circus. Seizing the moment after a hunting trip to portray his game while the impression was still fresh upon him, the artist has made a delightful picture in color, design and spontaneity (Acc. No. 44.63).



ONE OF A PAIR OF DUNCAN PHYFE SIDE TABLES, mahogany with marble top, made in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, which have been added to the Early Republican Gallery through the Gibbs-Williams Fund (Acc. No. 43.439).

R. H. T.

---

*Published monthly, October to May inclusive, at the Detroit Institute of Arts of the City of Detroit, 5200 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, Michigan. Entered as second class matter at the post office at Detroit, Michigan, under date of October 29, 1934. Subscription price \$1.00 per year.*