

## A Letter to Thorvaldsen from H. C. Andersen

As a young poet Hans Christian Andersen, later to become the world famous writer of fairy-tales, met Thorvaldsen in Rome during his first stay in 1833-34. They founded a friendship, motivated on Andersen's part by admiration, on Thorvaldsen's by compassion.

Andersen did not start a correspondence

with the sculptor after his year in Italy. However, when he heard that Thorvaldsen was about to return to Denmark from Rome, he wrote him a letter and asked the young sculptor Jens Adolph Jerichau, who was about to start his study trip to Rome, to deliver it. This letter, dated 10 May 1838, gives an account of the literary scene in Copenhagen.

Thorvaldsen's triumphal homecoming to

Copenhagen took place on 17 September 1838, and in his memoirs, *The Fairy-Tale of My Life*, Andersen mentions that out of modesty he did not visit the sculptor right away. However, in his *Almanak*, a day-by-day account of his doings, he wrote the day after that he went to see Thorvaldsen, "who kissed me on both cheeks".

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