

A GUIDE TO THORVALDSEN'S MUSEUM

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A guide to Thorvaldsen's Museum by L. Müller

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**A GUIDE TO
THORVALDSEN'S
MUSEUM**

A GUIDE

TO

Copenhagen
THORVALDSEN'S MUSEUM.

UNIV OF
CALIFORNIA

COPENHAGEN.

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1886.

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Thorvaldsen's Museum was erected by the community of Copenhagen as a repository for the works of art bequeathed by Thorvaldsen to his native town, a considerable sum having been previously collected by subscription for this purpose.

Thorvaldsen's Museum is also his Mausoleum, as it contains his tomb.

The tomb is situated in the centre of the court, covered with ivy and encompassed by a granite frame on which is engraved the name BERTEL THORVALDSEN together with the dates of his birth and death: 19 November 1770, 24 March 1844. The coffin is deposited in a decorated vault built while Thorvaldsen was yet alive, and in accordance with his wishes.

The building, a work of the architect Binesbøll, was begun in 1839 and finished in 1848. In its appearance is expressed its destination as the last resting place of Thorvaldsen. The architectural style is partly borrowed from old Egyptian and Greek sepulchral buildings, and the decorations, particularly on the walls of the court, remind us of those of antique tombs. Under the windows is seen a Genius in the

Chariot-race, a symbol of the human mind tending to and reaching the goal in spite of mischance and obstacles. Intermittently are seen vases and tripods, such as were in antiquity used as public rewards in prize contests and as offerings to the gods for victories gained; laurels, oaks, and palms, the leaves and branches of which served as emblems of honour and victory, shoot up along the walls.

The allusion to the victorious genius of Thorvaldsen is likewise observable in the decoration of the façade. Over the entrance of the museum Victory is reining up her quadriga, and in the capitals of the corner-pilasters are in front a Victory in her chariot, on the sides Sol and Luna with their swift steeds mounting to overpower darkness. The Victory in the quadriga, cast in bronze, is a present from king Christian VIII. The figure of the goddess was executed from a sketch left by Thorvaldsen, and the left of the middle horses after a model by him; the three other horses are after models by V. Bissen. The casting of the whole was executed by Dahlhoff. On the outside of the museum is represented Thorvaldsen's arrival at Copenhagen in 1838, when, after an absence of 18 years, he returned in a vessel sent out for a great part of the works destined for his museum. The arrival itself is depicted on the wall looking towards the canal, the conveyance of the works to the museum on the other side of the building. The whole of this imagery as well as that on the walls of the court has been produced by the inlaying of divers-coloured cements.

The rich decorations of the ceilings in the museum are mostly imitations from antique patterns or motives. The images forming parts of these decorations, some of them stucco-work, others paintings *al fresco*, are partly borrowed from antiques, partly copied from Thorvaldsen's works; the latter is the case in the Vestibule and in the Rooms IV, V, XV, and XVI. On the ceiling of the Room XXI are Christian representations.

The museum contains Thorvaldsen's works and collections. Besides his models and sketches in plaster and his designs, are found in the museum 109 of his works in marble, viz.: 4 groups, 20 statues, 20 busts, 65 reliefs, and 1 frieze. His works occupy the lower story and the corridors of the upper story entirely; in the latter a few of them have been placed in the rooms to the left; his sketches and designs are in the hindmost room. The models for the statues and reliefs hewn in marble are arranged in the corridor to the right in the lower story, and in the corridors at both sides in the upper story. Pictures by contemporary artists and having been possessed by Thorvaldsen are hung up in the left suit of rooms in the upper story. Antique classical art, which was of prominent interest to Thorvaldsen, is represented, in the rooms to the right, by collections of gems, coins, painted vases and various other antiquities, made during the many years of his residence at Rome, as well as by some plaster casts of antique sculptures belonging to those he had standing in his ateliers. For want of space the greater part of these casts however have been placed in the

rooms of the cellar. His collections of drawings, engravings, books &c. are placed in Rooms XXXII—XLII.

In the rooms of the cellar are further to be seen: works from Thorvaldsen's youth (in XLIII), some marble statues by modern artists (in XLIV), and in the last (LIII) various things that have belonged to Thorvaldsen's effects and serve to the illustration of his person and life.

Besides this manual catalogue, to be had in the museum also in Danish, German, and French, there has been published, in Danish and in French, a complete and detailed description of the collections of the museum, consisting of 8 parts, each sold separately.

1. Thorvaldsen's works.
2. Paintings and drawings.
3. Engravings, medals, and modern sculptures.
4. Various Egyptian, Etruscan, Greek, and Roman antiquities.
5. Antique gems and pastes.
6. Antique coins.
7. Plaster casts, mostly of antiques.
8. Books and bound engravings.

The numbers of the rooms are placed under the windows.

M. is in the following catalogue added to the works of Thorvaldsen which are of marble.

L. Müller.

GROUND FLOOR.

Thorvaldsen's works.

VESTIBULE.

Colossal Statues.

113. Nicolaus Copernicus. (Model for the bronze statue at Warsaw.)
- 114-116. Gutenberg. On the pedestal, in relief: Invention of movable types and of the printing press. (Models for the bronze monument at Mayence.)
123. Prince Joseph Poniatowski. (Model intended for a bronze monument at Warsaw.)
128. Maximilian I, Elector of Bavaria. (Model for the bronze monument at Munich.)
135. Schiller. On the pedestal: Apotheosis of the poet; Genius of Poetry; Goddess of Victory. (Models for the bronze monument at Stuttgart.)
- 142-145. Pope Pius VII. To the right: Heavenly Wisdom. To the left: Divine Strength. On the pedestal: the pope's arms held by two angels. (Models for the marble monument in St. Peter's church at Rome.)
156. Eugène, duke of Leuchtenberg (In marble at Munich on the duke's tomb.)

Colossal Busts.

209. Count X. P. Bernstorff, Danish minister.
 212. Adam Moltke, count, of Nütschau.
 219-220. Baron and Baroness Schubart. M.
 253. Horace Vernet, the painter. M.
 258. Sir Thomas Maitland, Lord Commissioner of the Ionian islands. (Modelled together with the relief No. 600 for the bronze monument in Zante.)

Reliefs.

317. Hercules receiving the drink of immortality from Hebe.
 318. Hygeia feeding the serpent of Æsculapius.
 319. Minerva giving a soul to the man formed by Prometheus.
 320. Nemesis reading to Jupiter the deeds of men.
 503. *Frieze.* Triumphal entry of Alexander the Great into Babylon. To the right: Alexander with his train. In the centre: Babylonians going in procession to meet the victor. To the left: Babylon and environs. (In the Quirinal Palace at Rome.)
 530. Genius of State Government.
 531. Genius of Justice.
 600. Minerva protecting Virtue and unveiling Vice. (See No. 258.)

CORRIDOR.

Statues.

7. Mars and Amor. (This group together with the following statue was intended for a representation borrowed from the 45th song of Anacreon and executed in relief No. 420 opposite.)
 9. Vulcanus.
 52. Jason with the Golden Fleece. (First greater work by Thorvaldsen.)