

UNIT 5: AULE METELE - ARRINGATORE









## PREVIEW THE ARTWORK

What is your **first impression** or **emotional response** to this artwork? (*Consider mood, tone, or feeling before analyzing details*)

What **questions** or **ideas** come to mind immediately? (*About the subject, artist, or technique*)

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### \*IMPORTANT\*

In the LMS assignment for this packet, I have attached large images you will be able to zoom in on & observe more closely!

## LEARN ABOUT THE ARTWORK

# AULE METELE - ARRINGATORE

**Artist:** Unknown Etruscan Sculptor      **Year:** Early 1st century BCE      **Medium:** Bronze  
**Original Location:** Cortona, Italy (found near Lake Trasimeno)  
**Style:** Etruscan with Roman Republican influence

## CONTEXT AND FIRST IMPRESSIONS

The bronze statue known as *Aule Metele*, often called *Arringatore* or *The Orator*, was created in the early first century BCE in central Italy. It depicts a man named Aule Meteli, an Etruscan magistrate whose identity is confirmed by an inscription engraved along the hem of his garment. Unlike many ancient sculptures whose subjects remain unknown, this figure speaks to us clearly through both image and text, combining visual presence with written language.

As you observe the statue, consider your first impression.

Does the figure feel active or still? Approachable or distant? What elements immediately communicate authority before you know anything about his identity?

The period in which this sculpture was made was one of transition. The Etruscans, once dominant in the region, were increasingly absorbed into Roman political and cultural systems. Roman power was expanding, and with it came Roman styles of dress, public behavior, and representation. This statue reflects that changing world. Although Aule Meteli was Etruscan, he presents himself using Roman visual language. His clothing, posture, and gesture align with Roman ideals of civic leadership and public order.

## FORM, FIGURE, AND BALANCE

The figure stands at **life size**, firmly grounded on both feet. His weight shifts subtly onto one leg, creating a restrained **contrapposto** (a term used in art to describe a standing figure in which the body's weight is shifted onto one leg, causing the hips, shoulders, and spine to subtly adjust in opposite directions) that prevents stiffness while maintaining balance. This slight shift introduces naturalism without dramatization. Unlike earlier Greek sculptures that often emphasized idealized athletic bodies, this figure prioritizes **realism** and **credibility**.

Why might a public official choose to be represented this way?  
What does realism communicate that idealization does not?

The raised right arm is the most commanding feature of the sculpture. The palm is open, the arm extended forward in a gesture associated with public address. **This is the pose of an orator**, someone speaking before an audience. The gesture is calm and controlled rather than forceful. It suggests authority rooted in reason and civic duty rather than physical power.

How does this gesture affect the way you read the figure's role?  
Where does your eye travel as you follow the line of the arm?

The composition of the sculpture is carefully structured. The raised arm creates a strong diagonal that leads upward toward the head and face, while the vertical stance of the body provides stability. This **balance of diagonals and verticals** keeps the figure visually engaging while remaining composed.

Think back to earlier units on composition and line.  
How do these directional lines help organize the figure and guide the viewer's attention?

## DRAPERY, STRUCTURE, AND SURFACE

Aule Meteli wears a short toga over a tunic, garments associated with Roman magistrates. The drapery wraps around the body in deliberate, weighty folds that respond to gravity and the form beneath. **These folds are not decorative additions**. They help define the structure of the figure, revealing the shape of the legs and torso without exposing them directly.

Notice how the fabric gathers and releases as it moves across the body.  
Where do the folds appear deepest, and where do they flatten out? What does this tell you about the body position underneath?

The surface of the bronze plays an essential role in **defining form**. Light catches on raised areas such as the folds of the toga, the forearm, and the planes of the face, while shadows settle into recessed spaces. These shifts in value give the sculpture depth and weight. Without color, **the artist relies entirely on light and shadow to communicate** three dimensionality.

How does this connect to what you have learned about value and shading? Where do you see the strongest contrasts?



## FACE, EXPRESSION, AND IDENTITY

The face of Aule Meteli is calm and serious. His features are **individualized rather than idealized**, reflecting a Roman preference during the late Republic for truthful representation. The eyes are deeply set, the mouth closed, and the expression focused. There is no dramatic emotion, only composure.

How does this expression support the figure's role as a public official?  
What would change if the face were more expressive or idealized?

Along the hem of the toga runs an inscription written in the **Etruscan language**. It records that the statue was set up as a dedication, likely by Aule Meteli or his family. This detail anchors the sculpture firmly in historical reality. It reminds us that ancient sculptures often served public, political, or religious purposes rather than existing purely as works of art.

Why might it matter that the inscription remains Etruscan while the visual language is Roman?

## MEANING AND REFLECTION

*Aule Metele (Arringatore)* stands as a record of **cultural transition**.

It reflects a society adapting to Roman rule while still preserving aspects of its own identity. Through form, gesture, material, and restraint, the sculpture communicates **authority without excess**. It shows how the human figure can convey role, responsibility, and presence through proportion, posture, and clarity rather than idealization.

As you continue to observe this sculpture, **consider how form and figure work together to communicate meaning**.

What choices did the artist make to ensure the figure feels credible, authoritative, and grounded in reality? And how do those choices reflect the values of the society that created it?

## OBSERVE THE ARTWORK

What is the **subject** (the main focus/story)?

- ☐ A Single Person    ☐ Group of people    ☐ Landscape or Nature    ☐ Still Life  
☐ Scene: Scripture    ☐ Scene: History    ☐ Scene: Mythology/Legend    ☐ Other:
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What **message** or **purpose** does this artwork have?

- ☐ Sacred / Religious    ☐ Secular / Non-Religious    ☐ Unknown / Unclear

How **realistic** is this artwork's style?

- ☐ Very Realistic / Naturalistic    ☐ Stylized but still recognizable    ☐ Abstract / Non-Representational

## TECHNIQUE & DESIGN

What is the **medium** used in this piece of artwork?

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What do you observe about the **surface/technique**?

- ☐ Smooth and Polished    ☐ Detailed and Precise    ☐ Textured or Layered  
☐ Energetic or Expressive    ☐ Repetitive or Patterned    ☐ Other:

What do you observe about **texture**?

- ☐ Smooth Surface    ☐ Rough or Uneven Surface    ☐ A Mix of Textures

What do you observe about **line**?

- ☐ Strong Outlines Around Shapes    ☐ Subtle/Blended Edges  
☐ Lines Create Movement or Direction    ☐ Lines Create Rhythm or Pattern

What do you observe about the **proportions**?

- ☐ Natural / Realistic    ☐ Idealized  
(more perfect than real life)    ☐ Exaggerated or Distorted



## LIGHT & SPACE

Can you locate the **light source** in the artwork?

☐ No      ☐ Yes      If yes, from where? .....

What do you observe about the light?

☐ Natural      ☐ Symbolic/Unrealistic      ☐ Studio Light      ☐ Direct Light/Harsh

Is there a sense of **movement**?

☐ Everything appears still & stable      ☐ A sense of motion (describe what suggests it):  
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Is there a sense of **depth**?

☐ Illusion of distance      ☐ flat/lacking depth

How did the artist suggest depth? (*Overlap, scale, perspective, color, etc*)  
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## COLOR & SYMBOLISM

What **hues** do you see? (*If applicable per the medium, check all that apply*)

☐ Red    ☐ Red-Orange    ☐ Orange    ☐ Yellow-Orange    ☐ Yellow    ☐ Yellow-Green  
☐ Green    ☐ Blue-Green    ☐ Blue    ☐ Blue-Violet    ☐ Violet    ☐ Red-Violet

Where do these hues appear on the **color wheel**?

☐ Complementary (*opposite*)    ☐ Analogous (*side-by-side*)    ☐ Warm    ☐ Cool

What **saturation**s are used?

☐ Bright/Intense    ☐ Pale    ☐ Darkened

Are there **symbolic uses** of color? Any meaning/purpose in the colors used? Explain.  
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## INTERPRETATION & MEANING

\*Use complete sentences!\*

What do you notice about the **gesture/positioning/gaze/placement** of the subject(s)?

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What **story, idea** or **emotion** might the artist be communicating to you through this artwork? What story are they trying to tell?

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How might someone in the original time and place have understood or appreciated this artwork differently than you do today? Would there be a different narrative around it?

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Does this artwork **remind you of another** artwork, story, or cultural symbol? Does it look like anything else you have observed in your studies or the world around you?

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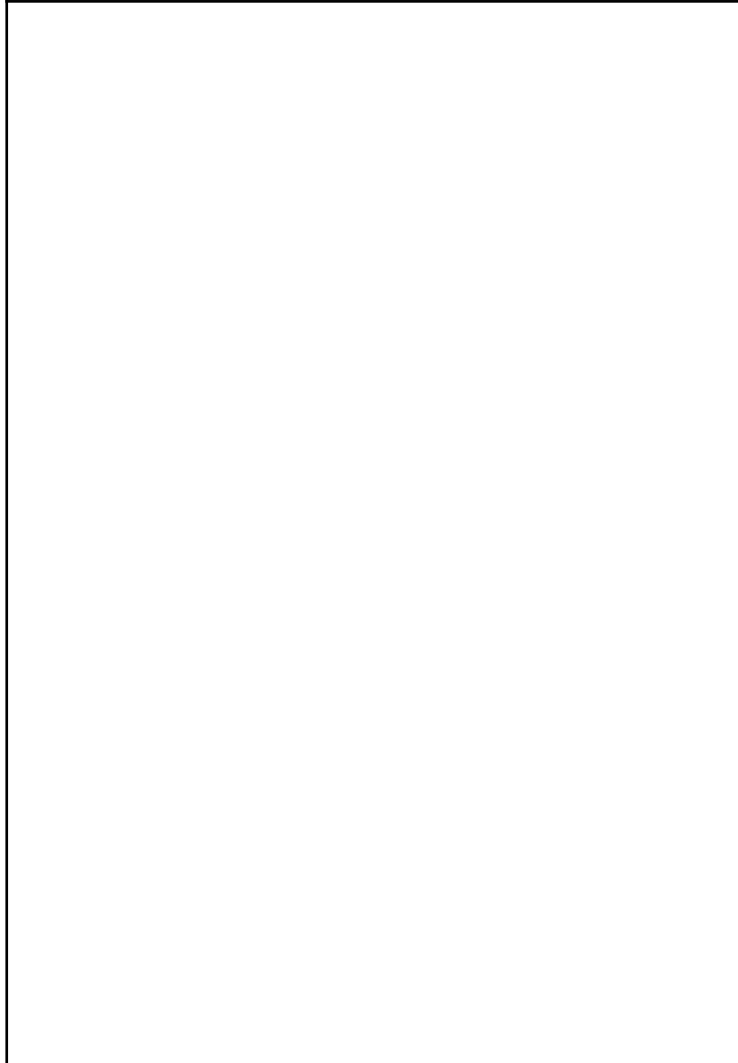
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## COMPOSITION SKETCH

Sketch the **figure positioning** and **proportions in simple shape form**.



## \* KEY FACTS FOR MEMORIZATION \*

**TITLE:** .....

**ARTIST:** .....

**YEAR:** .....

**LOCATION:** .....

**MEDIUM:** .....

**STYLE:** .....