

Victorious Youth, Greek

Victorious Youth

Greek, 300–100 B.C.

Bronze

59 5/8 x 27 9/16 x 11 in.

77.AB.30

Background Information

This statue depicts a naked youth standing with his weight on his right leg, crowning himself with an olive wreath. The olive wreath was the prize for a victor in the Olympic Games and identifies this youth as a victorious athlete. The eyes of the figure were originally inlaid with colored stone or **glass paste**, and the nipples and eyelashes were inlaid with **copper**, creating naturalistic color contrasts.

Found in the sea off the coast of Italy, this statue is one of the few life-size Greek **bronzes** that survive today, and it provides much information on the technology of ancient bronze casting. The place of origin of the statue is unknown, but either Olympia or the youth's hometown is possible. Romans probably carried the statue off from its original location during the first century b.c. or a.d., when Roman collecting of Greek art was at its height. The Roman ship carrying it to Italy may have sunk off the coast, preserving the statue for centuries in the sea.



Questions for Teaching

What do you notice about the pose of the figure?

What is this person doing?

Take a pose that you think represents the idea of victory.

How is it similar to or different from this pose?

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What other details do you notice?

What could be some reasons for the unusual colors on the surface of this sculpture?

Look at a penny. What colors do you see? If you see green, what are some reasons the penny might have changed color? This sculpture is made of metals similar to those in a penny and reacts to water the same way a penny does if you toss and leave it in a fountain.