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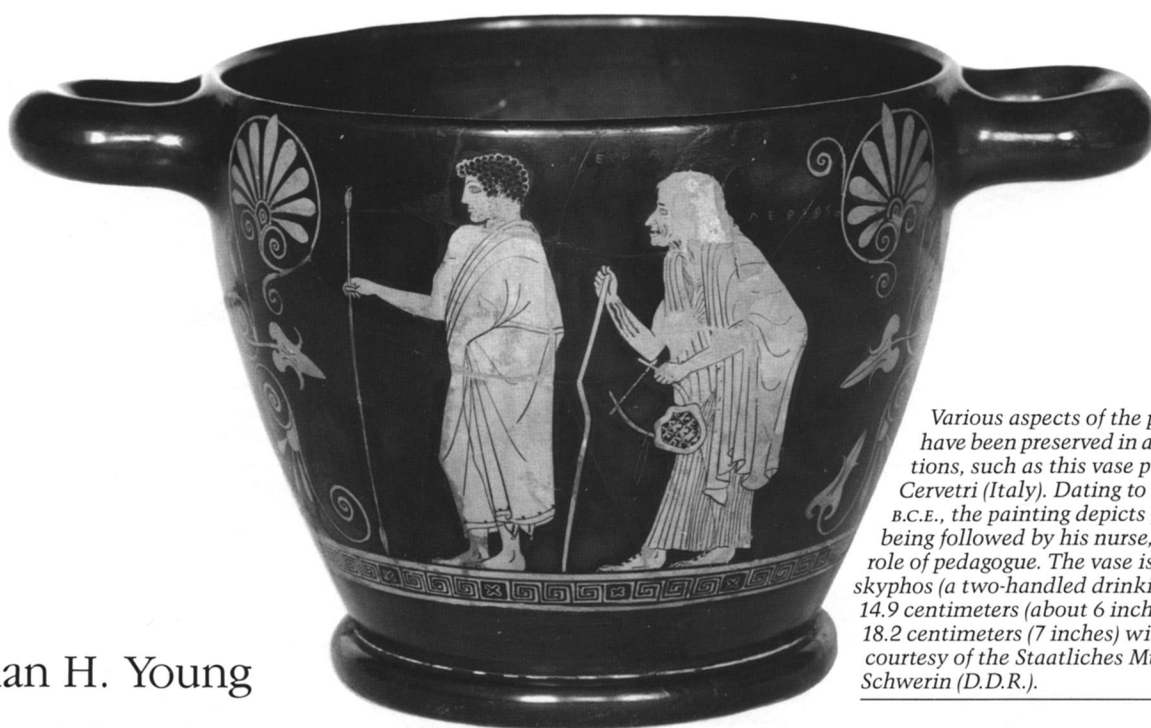


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The Figure of the *Paidagōgos* in Art and Literature

by
Norman H. Young



Various aspects of the pedagogue's task have been preserved in artistic representations, such as this vase painting from Cervetri (Italy). Dating to the fifth century B.C.E., the painting depicts young Hercules being followed by his nurse, Geropso, in the role of pedagogue. The vase is an Attic red skyphos (a two-handled drinking cup); it is 14.9 centimeters (about 6 inches) tall and 18.2 centimeters (7 inches) wide. Reproduced courtesy of the Staatliches Museum, Schwerin (D.D.R.).

When Paul wrote that the law was our pedagogue until Christ came but now that faith had arrived we are no longer under a pedagogue (Galatians 3:24–25), he used a metaphor without parallel in the Greek Bible. Because the term *paidagōgos* is exclusive to Paul in the biblical literature, the commentator is forced to sift through the classical and Hellenistic sources in an effort to elucidate Paul's meaning.

The pedagogue was a slave guardian appointed by a father to supervise his son's activities and behavior from the time the child woke up in the morning until he went to bed at night (see Longenecker 1982; Lull 1986; Young 1987). A boy came under the pedagogue's control at about age six and remained under his authority until well after puberty. Pedagogues had a reputation for harshness, which was not unwarranted, as the cane, the whip, and

the rod were basic accoutrements of the pedagogue's art. Severity was not the universal practice, however. Many pedagogues fulfilled their role with kindness and endeared themselves to their charges in a life-long bond. Nevertheless, whether bad or good, the pedagogue's administration always terminated when the boy came of age and became his own master.

The manifold nature of the pedagogue's role has led to considerable differences of opinion regarding the interpretation of Paul's suggestive

metaphor. Some scholars have stressed the severity of the pedagogue and thus of the law (Hübner 1984: 33; Betz 1979: 177–78); others, focusing on the benign character of the pedagogue, have seen the law in more positive terms (Lull 1986: 496; Gordon 1989: 153–54). On the other hand, most commentators have emphasized the relevance of the temporary nature of the pedagogue's task for Paul's analogy with the law (Burton 1921: 200; Bruce 1982: 183; Longenecker 1982: 56).

It is not the purpose of this article to solve these exegetical difficulties by pinpointing which aspect of the pedagogue figure Paul intended when he made the analogy in Galatians 3:24–25. I merely want to draw attention to some of the more visual examples of the pedagogue's function in the ancient world in the hope that such illumination will offer valuable clues to Paul's meaning.

Ancient Examples of the Pedagogue

When Socrates asked the youthful Lysis whether anyone ruled (*archein*) over him, he replied that his pedagogue, a slave, ruled him. In response to the further inquiry as to how the pedagogue ruled over him, Lysis answered, "By leading (*agōn*) me to school, I suppose."¹ This common² description is hardly exhaustive or

completely accurate, for the pedagogue did much more than simply take the child to school, and he did not always lead but often followed his charge. The Greek biographer and moralist, Plutarch, noted this anomaly and commented that the pedagogue "is said to lead (*agein*), though he walks behind them and not before" (*Moralia*, 1008F, see Cherniss 1976: 101). Both the literary sources and the artistic depictions make it quite clear, however, that the pedagogue frequently led rather than followed his charge, especially when the boy was a very young child.

Various aspects of the pedagogue's task have been preserved in artistic representations. On a vase painting dating to the fifth century B.C.E., Geropso, the nurse of Hercules, is depicted as his pedagogue following him to school. Apparently Hercules was to have a music lesson, because Geropso is shown carrying a lyre. A Lekythos (a single-handled jug used for oil) shows an actual pedagogue doing the identical task (Beck 1975: plate 12, figure 68). Such examples clarify those texts that use *akolouthēin* ("to follow")³ to describe the pedagogue accompanying the child to school. However, numerous terracotta examples indicate that younger boys were led by the hand or were helped along with a gentle hold

around the shoulder (see, for example, Beck 1975: plate 12, figure 65). Thus, those texts that use *agein* ("to lead") or *hegeisthai* ("to guide")⁴ are not so contrary to custom as Plutarch would have had us believe. That the nurse of Hercules should be depicted as a pedagogue is not so surprising when one considers that the pedagogue often functioned as a nurse. Ancient authors frequently associated the pedagogue with the *titthe*⁵ ("wet-nurse") or *trophos*⁶ ("nurse"), sometimes calling the pedagogue a *trophos*⁷ or *tropheus*⁸ ("foster-father").

Although the pedagogue's role usually began after the nurse had concluded her task (that is, at about age six), there are texts that refer to

Numerous terracotta examples show young boys being helped along by their pedagogues. **Below left:** This terracotta figure from Myrina (Turkey), for example, shows a pedagogue leading his charge by the hand. Dating to the Hellenistic era, the figure is 16 centimeters (about 6 inches) tall. It is currently housed in the National Archaeological Museum, Athens. Reproduced courtesy of the T.A.P. service.

Below center: This terracotta figure from Cyrene (Libya), dating to the Hellenistic period, shows a hooded old man leading five children. It is 13.4 centimeters (about 5 inches) tall. Reproduced courtesy of the Musée du Louvre, Paris. **Below right:** Found in a tomb on the Tamanski Peninsula along the Black Sea, this terracotta figure depicts a hooded pedagogue carrying a lyre and gently leading a small boy. Dating to the fourth century B.C.E., it is 14.1 centimeters (about 5½ inches) tall. Reproduced courtesy of the Hermitage Museum, Leningrad.



the pedagogue having charge of a baby? Similarly, according to the ancient author Libanius, whenever a child became sick, the pedagogue played the role of nurse (*Oration*, 58.8–11, see Festugière 1959: 469). There are also terracotta examples of pedagogues carrying very young children (Rostovtzeff 1941: I.212, plate XXX, figure 2; Daremberg and Saglio 1907: IV.272, figure 5450; Klein 1932: plate 32B) as well as one where the pedagogue is holding the child's rattle.

The role of a pedagogue walking behind his charge with his charge's lyre in his hand is colorfully described in the following passage by Pseudo-Lucian:

We ought therefore to contrast with the evils associated with women the manly life of a boy. He rises at dawn from his unwed couch, washes away with pure water such sleep as still remains in his eyes and after securing his shirt and his mantle with pins at the shoulder "he leaves his father's hearth with eyes bent down" and without facing the gaze of anyone he meets. He is followed by an orderly company of attendants and tutors (*paidagōgoi*), who grip in their hands the revered instruments of virtue, not the points of a toothed

comb that can caress the hair nor mirrors that without artists' aid reproduce the shapes confronting them, but behind him come many-leaved writing tablets or books that preserve the merit of ancient deeds, along with a tuneful lyre, should he have to go to a music master (*Affairs of the Heart*, 44, see Macleod 1967: 217–19).

School began early, as the above reference to rising at dawn and others¹⁰ indicate. Sometimes it was necessary, therefore, for the pedagogue to carry a lamp (Rostovtzeff 1941: I.212, plate XXX, figure 2). The pedagogue put the boy to bed and personally woke him up early for school (Libanius's *Oration*, 58.8, see Festugière 1959: 469).

The pedagogue was usually stylized as a grumpy Socrates look-alike (see, for example, Beck 1975: plate 12, figure 67). This is because the terracotta figures were modeled after the appearance of the satyr, Silenus. Socrates and Silenus were often portrayed as having similar features. Silenus was notorious as a bibulous and lecherous old oaf and was thus a natural model for the pedagogue, whom the ancients com-

Left: The pedagogue was usually stylized as a grumpy Socrates look-alike, as portrayed on this terracotta figure from Corinth. Terracotta figures were modeled after the appearance of the satyr Silenus. Socrates and Silenus were often portrayed as having similar features. Notorious as a bibulous and lecherous old oaf, Silenus was a natural model for the pedagogue, whom the ancients generally held in low esteem. Dating to the Hellenistic era, the figure is 14 centimeters (almost 5½ inches) tall and is located in the National Archaeological Museum, Athens. Reproduced courtesy of the T.A.P. service. **Right:** The tender side of the pedagogue is shown on this terracotta figure, probably made in Myrina (Turkey). The pedagogue has his arm wrapped around the boy's back and is looking on warmly, as if listening to him read. The figure is 11.8 centimeters (4½ inches) tall and dates to the Hellenistic era. Reproduced courtesy of The Trustees of the British Museum, London. The image of the instructor on this and other terracotta figures is so like the Silenus pedagogue caricature that one barely hesitates before identifying each as a pedagogue helping a child with his homework.

monly held in low esteem. Pedagogues certainly got drunk;¹¹ some no doubt did so habitually.

The image of the instructor on terracotta figurines is so like the Silenus/pedagogue caricature that one barely hesitates before identifying each figure as a pedagogue helping a child with his homework.¹² Libanius (*Oration*, 58.9, see Festugière 1959: 469) and Aphthonius (*Progymnasmata*, 5.15, see Hock and O'Neil 1986: 227) inform us that the pedagogue sometimes performed this task. The ugliness of the pedagogues on these terracotta figures supports the proverbial dread that children had of the pedagogue's visage.¹³

Pedagogues often sat in on the lessons of the teacher proper. The famous Duris artist's vase from the fifth century B.C.E. is an excellent example of this (Beck 1975: plate 18, figure 97, plate 19, figures 100 and 101, plate 20, figure 107). The pedagogues sat within earshot of the lessons in music (flute and lyre), poetry, and writing. The classical stemless cup by the Painter of Munich in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York shows a group of children playing school, accurately reproducing this same kind of scene, including the pedagogue seated nearby.

Both Aelius Aristides (*Oration*



32.15, see Behr 1981: 160–61) and Suetonius (*On Grammarians*, 23, see Rolfe 1914: 429) tell us that the pedagogue often gained knowledge and manumission from the opportunity afforded by such proximity to the teacher. The most celebrated example of this is the pedagogue Remmius Palaemon, who became a wealthy educator in the time of the emperors Tiberius, Claudius, and Nero. Such learned former pedagogues were ridiculed, of course, both in literature¹⁴ and in art (see Hunter and Marsh 1982: 254 for a reproduction of “a humorous painting of a pedagogue—described as a new-style lecturer of the cult of reason”).

Despite the system’s shortcomings, children often had a lasting affection for their pedagogues; not infrequently on reaching maturity they manumitted their faithful childhood guides. Funerary texts dedicated to pedagogues illustrate the regard with which their former charges esteemed them. However, the pedagogue was also infamous for administering punishment—often all too vigorously.¹⁵

The darker aspect of the pedagogue’s character is faithfully depicted in artistic representations. One terracotta from Myrina (Daremberg and Saglio 1907: IV.272, figure 5449) shows a pedagogue twisting the ear of a presumably recalcitrant boy. The technique of twisting the ear was a discipline favored by Chilo, the pedagogue of Cato the Elder’s son (Plutarch’s *Marcus Cato*, 20.4, see Perrin 1914: 361), and recommended by Clement of Alexandria (*The Instructor*, 1.7, see Roberts and Donaldson 1962: 223). The pedagogue represented by a Hellenistic terracotta figure from Asia Minor in the Metropolitan Museum of Art has what appears to be a strap over his right shoulder, a corrective instrument favored by the pedagogues.¹⁶

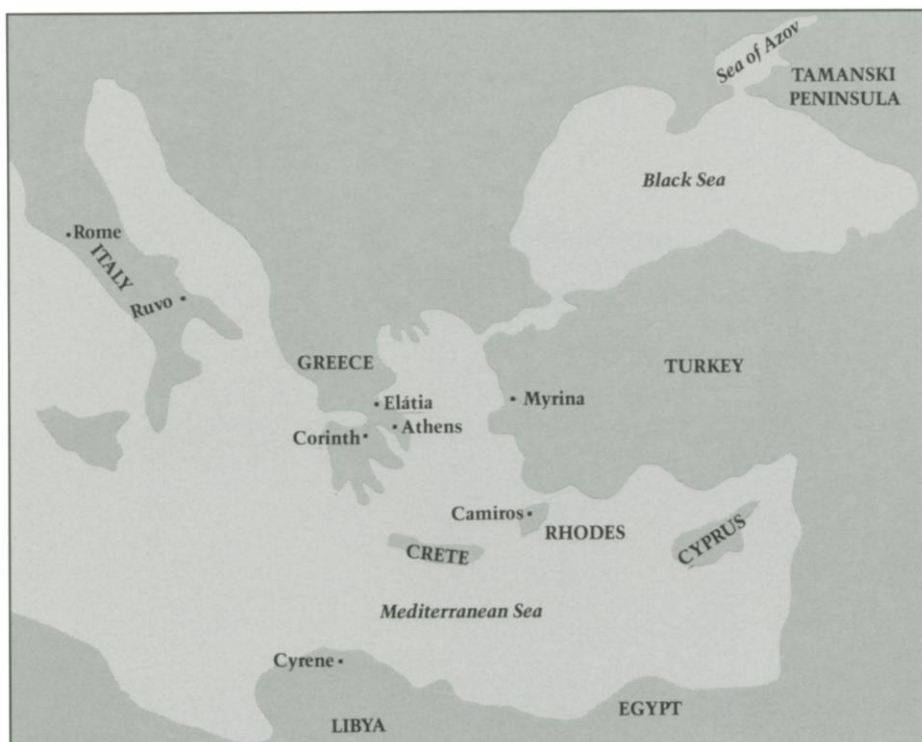
The crooked staff that the pedagogue is often depicted carrying is a sign of a freedman and is not especially designed as a rod for the back.

Various aspects of the pedagogue’s task have been preserved in artistic representations.



Pedagogues often sat in during lessons in the arts. In the scene above, pictured on one side of an Attic red-figured cup by the Duris painter, a pedagogue (with staff) looks on while his charge receives formal instruction in poetry and music. The cup dates to the fifth century B.C.E. Reproduced courtesy of the Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin (West). Standing at the far left of the scene below, painted on an Attic red-figured hydria found in a tomb at Camiros (Rhodes) and attributed to the Pig Painter, is the pedagogue, looking on during a music lesson. The hydria (a large, three-handled jar used to carry water from a fountain) dates to the fifth century B.C.E. It is 28.3 centimeters (11 inches) tall. Reproduced courtesy of The Trustees of the British Museum, London.





The staff was too serviceable an instrument, however, and too ready at hand not to have been used to beat the disobedient. Alciphron recorded an example of such a usage where the carousing Charicles had his back

pounded with the crooked staff of Smicrines, his harsh pedagogue (*Epistle*, 3.7.3–4, see Benner and Fobes 1949: 151). There is also a vase scene where a naughty boy (on one side of the vase) is depicted running

away from an angry pedagogue (on the other side of the vase) who has his stick raised ready to deliver the punitive blows.

There is no doubt that the pedagogue's reputation for being zealous with the strap and cane was well deserved. Children generally had a great dread of their pedagogues and secretly desired the opportunity to mock and abuse them.¹⁷ However, there are also numerous texts that speak of the great affection that existed between a child and his pedagogue. Many terracotta figures reveal a gentle side to the pedagogue's disposition. An example of this is the apparent habit of placing a tender hand on a boy's shoulder or head (Rostovtzeff 1941: I.416, plate L, figure 1), which demonstrates that ruthless discipline was not the only characteristic of the pedagogues.

Determining exactly what Paul meant when he referred to the law as our pedagogue (Galatians 3:24) requires a larger survey of the sources than is undertaken here (see Longenecker 1982; Lull 1986; Young 1987; Gordon 1989). Paul's analogy of the

The pedagogue was often depicted as carrying a crooked staff, a sign of a freedman that was not especially designed as a rod. The staff was too serviceable an instrument, though, and too ready at hand not to have been used to beat charges who were disobedient. Left: This red-figured pelike (a two-handled vessel used to carry liquids) by the Orpheus Painter, from Elatia (Greece), illustrates the pedagogue's use of a crooked staff. The pelike dates to the fifth century B.C.E. It is 28 centimeters (almost 11 inches) tall and is located in the National Archaeological Museum, Athens. Reproduced courtesy of the T.A.P. service. Below: Pedagogues had a reputation for harshness, which was not unwarranted, as the cane, the whip, and the rod were the basic accoutrements of his trade. This Attic red-figured skyphos from Ruvo (Italy), for example, shows an angry pedagogue with his stick raised ready to punish a naughty boy, who is running away on the opposite side of the vase. Dating to the fifth century B.C.E., the vase is 11.6 centimeters (4½ inches) tall and 10 centimeters (almost 4 inches) in diameter at the base. Reproduced courtesy of the Soprintendenza Archeologia della Puglia, Taranto, Museo Nazionale, Bari.



pedagogue seems to refer to the period when Israel was under the law as a temporary restrictive protection (or protective restriction) imposed until the coming of Christ. Be that as it may, the picture we get of the pedagogue's role from the terracotta figures and vase paintings in association with the literary references certainly increases our appreciation of the richness of this pauline metaphor and, it is hoped, our understanding of it.

Notes

- ¹Plato, *Lysis*, 208C (see Lamb 1925: 23).
- ²Julian, *Misopogon*, or, *Beard-hater*, 352C (see Wright 1913: 461); Appian, *Roman History: The Civil Wars*, 5.4.30 (see White 1913: 191); Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, 6.36.2 (see Rolfe 1914: 153), and *On Grammarians*, 23 (see Rolfe 1914: 429).
- ³Aristides, *Oration*, 32.15 (see Behr 1981: 160–61); Plutarch, *Moralia*, 195C (see Babbitt 1931: 159), and *Moralia*, 1008F (see Cherniss 1976: 101); Pseudo-Lucian, *Affairs of the Heart*, 44 (see Macleod 1967: 217–19).
- ⁴Plato, *Lysis*, 208C (see Lamb 1925: 23); Aristides, *In Defence of Oratory*, 189 (see Behr 1973: 385); Julian, *Misopogon*, or, *Beard-hater*, 352C (see Wright 1913: 461); Plutarch, *Moralia*, 1008F (see Babbitt 1931: 159).
- ⁵Demosthenes, *Oration*, 47.56 (see Murray 1939: 311); Epictetus, *Discourse*, 1.11.21–23 (see Oldfather 1925: 83–85); Philo, *Who is the Heir*, 295 (see Colson and Whittaker 1932: 435), and *On The Sacrifice of Abel and Cain*, 15 (see Colson and Whittaker 1929: 103).
- ⁶Plato, *Protagoras*, 325C–D (see Lamb 1924: 143), and *Republic*, 373C (see Shorey 1937: 163); Libanius, *Oration*, 18.289 (see Norman 1969: 475).
- ⁷Artemidorus Daldianus, 1.78 (see White 1975: 60).
- ⁸Xenophon of Ephesus, 1.14.4 (see Hadas 1953: 82); Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 9.126–27 (see Marcus 1937: 69).
- ⁹Martial, *Epigram*, 11.39 (see Ker 1968: 267).
- ¹⁰Aeschines, *Against Timarchus*, 12 (see Adams 1919: 13).
- ¹¹Plato, *Lysis*, 223A (see Lamb 1925:

69); Plutarch, *Moralia*, 4B (see Babbitt 1927: 19).

¹²Scholars are divided over the identification of these terracotta figures. For example, S. F. Bonner (1977: vii, figure 5) has identified the Silenus-pedagogue figure from Eretria (Greece) in the British Museum as a pedagogue, whereas F. A. G. Beck (1975: 20, note 71) has indicated that the figure is a teacher with a pupil.

¹³Alciphron, *Letter*, 3.1.3 (see Benner and Fobes 1949: 151); *Life of Aesop*, 15 (see Daly 1961: 37).

¹⁴Aristides, *In Defence of Oratory*, 380 (see Behr 1973: 507); see also the references in note 13.

¹⁵Aristides, *In Defence of Oratory*, 380 (see Behr 1973: 507); Libanius, *Orations*, 43.9, 58.9 (see Festugière 1959: 162, 469), *Epistle*, 1188.3–4 (see Foerster 1903–1923); Quintilian, 1.3.17 (see Butler 1920: 61); Martial, *Epigram*, 11.39 (see Ker 1968: 267).

¹⁶Alciphron, *Epistle*, 3.7.3–4 (see Benner and Fobes 1949: 151); Libanius, *Epistle*, 911.2 (see Foerster 1903–1923); Pseudo-Callisthenes, *Life of Alexander*, 1.39.4 (see Kroll 1958: 44).

¹⁷Dio Chrysostom, *Discourse*, 72.10 (see Crosby 1951: 185).

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