

Conpaedagogita bene merens: epigraphic evidence on education in the paedagogium.

Although several articles on the educations of slaves have been published (Mohler 1940, Forbes 1955 and Booth 1979), no study so far has focused on the term *conpaedagogita* and its attestation in the epigraphic record. As the word clearly signifies, a *conpaedagogita* was someone who attended, along with other students, the *paedagogium*, the school where imperial *vernae* were educated since at least the time of Tiberius. This paper explores the epigraphic attestation of this understudied designation in order to catch a glimpse of the relationships established by young adults inside the school and whether they lasted over time.

There are only six inscriptions from the city of Rome featuring this designation (*CIL* 6. 9759, 9760, 9761, 9762, 9763, 9764) and they are all funerary epitaphs, where either the dedicator or the dedicatee is addressed as a fellow-student. Moreover, the term does not always indicate enslaved individuals. Indeed, among the recorded *conpaedagogitae*, four are free individuals and two are enslaved. The lack of pseudo-filiation does not allow us to identify the free men as formerly in bondage, although they were most likely freedmen.

Among this small corpus, only *CIL* 6. 9759 expresses the age of the deceased. The dedicatee of this epitaph, Erastus, was twenty-two when he died and, although it is not possible to know for sure at what age he left the *paedagogium*, it must have been just a few years prior. The other five inscriptions do not give any indication of how much time had passed between when these men attended the same school together and when one of them died. It is, therefore, hard to speculate on whether the *conpaedagogita* maintained strong connections into their adulthood. Arguably, the small number of *inscriptions* featuring this very specific term suggests that such bonds were not maintained for decades, and that the men who were buried and commemorated by their fellow-students represent a specific

intersection of two conditions: lack of close relatives who could take care of burial and dying within a few years of “graduation”.

This overlooked sample of inscriptions is small, yet significant to understand interpersonal relations inside the *paedagogium*. Moreover, the use (and coinage) of term *conpaedagogita* is particularly noteworthy once it is compared to similar compounds such as *colliberti* or *conservi*. All these terms show the existence of social networks that are not attested in literature but at times immortalized on epitaphs. As such, their study and discussion foster a more complete and inclusive representation of Roman society and daily social interactions that must have taken place.

Bibliography

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