



News memo
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Let's play "What's this thing?"

Inquiring minds (and fortunately they are some at all ages) will appreciate to meet an enigma. What is this thing? What was it used for, where, when? Those who want to play, or encourage their pupils to search a little - teachers are definitely in the spotlight this month - will find in our "What's this thing" game a way to spend a good time.

There is much more to discover than just the appearance of an object: You'll find easily that the coin on this picture represents Alexander the Great, fine.



But we can go much further, by looking at it closely!

What is this strange headdress Alexander wears? Why? On the reverse, why is his Greek name followed by a Gamma (how did the Greeks count?). Why does the figure has his legs parallel, and not crossed, as on other coins? What is this bird in his hand (Who is it? What means Aetophoros?). How much does this coin weight, and why?

And well, let's have a little fun: here on the right is another mystery item, which is full of surprises: what did it contain (no need to be an egyptologist).

<http://sites-archeologiques.perso.sfr.fr>

Editorial:

Is Latin teaching like Asterix's village?



This month, we added on our site a page "Learning Latin or Greek?". What for? Many teachers already explain on the web the interest of ancient languages. But well, they are teachers. You may think that they are simply defending their territory, their beleaguered village. For once, let the words come from elsewhere.

Some announce also the death of the teaching of dead languages. This makes a lot of deaths, and if "they are dead", people may understand that to bury them is the best thing to do. Yet Latin and Greek are still present in our language, in all our western culture, our history and our daily life. Dead and useless? It would be as stupid as declaring unnecessary the roots of a tree, because its fruit grow on the branches.

So what are they good for? Everybody admits that English, mathematics, history, geography (despite the GPS) and even sports are useful. Nothing is said against art or music teaching, which are pleasure activities. Ancient languages are rarely the basis of a career (except for teachers and researchers, precisely), they are no leisure, they do not educate the body. But they educate the mind, help you to locate yourself in the course of time, to understand yourself and thus to understand the others.

Oh, of course, if today you consider as a useful teaching only what will help our children to find a well-paid job... But is it therefore unnecessary to understand themselves, to be tolerant, to find their place in the world and its culture?

Once more, teachers recently wondered if "Becoming a teacher is a commitment?". Well, are parents wondering sometimes about it? Is adapting young people to the world where they got immersed, not more than a commitment, a responsibility and a duty? Is it enough to teach them how to make money? How to teach the parents - that is perhaps the right question. To tomorrow's parents, perhaps? Do not let us off-load this duty only onto people who had the weakness - or the courage? - to make a job of it...

René Kauffmann

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New this month

As announced opposite, a new page "[Learning Latin and Greek](#)" and also our "[What's this thing?](#)" game.

If you wish to answer, to submit other mystery things, or simply add comments, email us!



What's this thing?



Did you notice?

Our "[Museums and Sites](#)" section already presented the French museums. We supplemented this information by adding, in the "Ancient Worlds" section, for [Egyptians](#), [Greeks](#), [Etruscans](#), and [Phoenicians](#), a new page dedicated to the museum collections around the world, including links to their websites.