

Newsletter

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Editorial:

www.AnticoPédie.net

Make them eager to learn

Times have changed. While Latin teaching has been declining since the late 18th century, other civilizations came to fame, revealing the hieroglyphic and cuneiform writings, the eastern, asian and precolombian cultures. Every culture is no more Greco-Roman. With globalization, shouldn't we teach a little of all those? I agree, they are not "our roots", but nevertheless... Well.

There was a time when learning Latin was a prerequisite for any culture. No salvation outside classics! Today, the argument claiming the importance of Latin as a way to develop thinking, to train the spirit, as a contribution to culture in general and to the french language in particular, loses its power. In short: is it useful? "Maths first", we have been told for a century, even though I do not remember having studied any polynomial since the end of my studies. Today's paper is based on an observation: most students are not enthusiastic about the Latin lessons, although they chose to join the course. Things are slightly different with Greek: Ancient Greece still exerts a magical attraction (the astonishing inventiveness of the Athenian golden age, the peculiar alphabet, legends and mythology ...). Indeed, few pupils attend the course: you need to be really willing to learn it, since Greek is not taught everywhere and on the best places of the timetable.

Do not despair. If Latin and Greek are no more a prerequisite for culture, they can follow the cultural knowledge. Reveal young people the charms of these worlds. They'll become afterwards more interested in the language - already at college perhaps, but especially at high school or even later. The comments from buyers of self-learning methods show that they are mostly young people, but also seniors who want to start again the language or even just to start. Why not? I know some older people, who are enthusiastic about Egyptology, and began to take a closer look at hieroglyphs after many years, sometimes when retired. It is never urgent to learn, and there is no age for learning, all you need is the taste for learning

René Kauffmann

Our website's name changed! This shows that we intend to approach soon new fields and technical developments.

Our new host offers better technical performance, and also displays precise statistics about the pages the visitors are interested in. Did we loose a lot of visitors by moving to our new address? I don't think so: on the first days, we had daily already 150 different visitors, each one reading an average of 6 pages.

For the last month of their duty, our "personal SFR pages" were ranked at the 12th place of the most interesting sites of its category, with a "utility score for users" (?) of 73%.

Not bad, considering that before us, 9 sites were informative pages designed by SFR itself

Living ancient worlds or dead languages?

I'm still committed to the Classics, and I'm going on still... And recently, I attended a forum where teachers explained their concerns, and how inventive they had to be for catching the interest of collegians during latin lessons: they have to organize travels to Italy, practise handicrafts and arts, attend book fairs, theater performances, fashion shows and whatever can keep their attention better than latin grammar and literature.

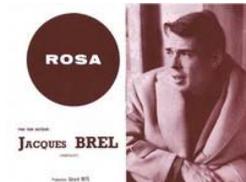
I happened to wonder why the students chose this option, if teachers have to search elsewhere how to keep them coming! The excellent website [La question du latin](#) brings many indications and facts, supplemented by a detailed message of its webmaster, whom I thank gratefully, as well as the [ARELA of Clermont-Ferrand](#) (regional association of ancient languages teachers), which organizes free courses for all ages.

Do Students enrol for "good" reasons??

Our teenagers join the courses under the influence of their teachers, of their parents (who see there a way to reach a high level teaching), classmates, the promise of school trips or of getting additional points at exams, but more rarely because of their own feeling. A debate organized by Okapi - a teen magazine - on the question "For or against Latin teaching at college?" revealed that a significant part of young people are disappointed with their choice and would like to quit, feel "trapped" and bored in class. This surely does not enrich the atmosphere of the school. As a result: the number of pupils declines each year, and worse, most of students who chose Latin at college, drop out before the final year of high school. What can we do?

**Are "rosa rosa rosam" the keywords?**

The interest in ancient culture keeps growing, the number of visitors in museums and exhibitions is steadily increasing, movies are still inspired by ancient myths. Therefore, if Latin teaching must hide behind other cultural



activities that are not language courses, it would be better to admit this as a fact, to stop calling the courses "Latin lessons" and "ancient Greek" and to call them a "teaching on ancient civilizations" (art, culture, spirit, mythology, architecture, everything that still fascinates), with of course an introduction to language and literature.

This changing has implicitly already begun. "Teaching Greek and Latin is consistent with the study of mythology, the life in Greek cities, the history of the Roman Empire, and of classical art" (cf website [www.vosquestionsdepartements.fr](#)). The recent teachers' symposium "meeting about ancient languages and cultures" contains already the question in its title, and the Ministry for education advocated in 2010 an "exploration teaching on ancient languages and cultures". A pretty new name, which would suppress the old vanity sentence "My son learns Latin" (because I've done... or because I did not).

And what about the sense of effort?

Some may say that if ancient languages are difficult, this is precisely what makes them interesting and distinguishes Latin scholars from common people. What a pleasure to read the ancient authors in their original language, to get in real touch with their spirit?! Yes, of course. Part of college pupils are sensitive to this charm, but by far not all of them. Are they just avoiding effort? That would be frightening, because it could lead some day to abandon also writing and arithmetics, which, after all, are not easy either, and we may as well doubt about the charms of irregular verbs and times tables...



Now seriously. It's precisely when becoming teen-agers that children stop working just to please their parents and teachers. Afterwards, a strong effort is accepted willingly only if it is supported by a passion. So, long live the "living ancient cultures course"!

Our website moved !

After a two years' experience, we leaved the "personal pages" world, aiming both at upgrading our site's functions and developing its content.

Our new address

l'AnticoPédie
www.AnticoPédie.net

shows our will to approach many more fields and extend our educational offer

**First additions !**

In order to get a better interactivity with your comments, particularly on our Editorials and papers, we opened a new Blog

Le Blog de l'AnticoPédie

Any comment and suggestion are welcome.



Second addition: an RSS Feed!
Subscribe to our "ancient worlds diary"

You'll notice this icon on our website. Clicking on it, you'll get permanently informed on new exhibitions, conferences and events in France on the field of ancient mediterranean civilisations.

For further information, [click here](#).

**Did you notice?**

Your mystery artefacts! Previously published on our (still existing) Forum, they are now displayed on our new blog. Have any idea about them? Click [here](#) and tell us!

**See you soon on our pages**

All your comments and advices are welcome!

**Write us !**