

## Preface and Acknowledgments

Andy Stafford

Instead of being a message of hope for the future, as they were in the great days of humanism, [Classics] have become a pastime for a leisured minority striving ineffectually to find a refuge from it. Our Hellenic heritage must be rescued from the Mandarins, or else it will perish, destroyed by its devotees.

George Thomson<sup>1</sup>

We now know that at acute periods in recent history (WW1, the interwar years, WW2) Classics – ancient Greece – have been used to navigate and interrogate both the past and the future. What about today? It is in this spirit that Claude Coste and I hatched a plan to look at Roland Barthes and Greece – not just ancient but also modern – in order to allow Barthes to speak to the twenty-first century. I am pleased to say also that, in parallel with this special number, there is a study day in Paris, on the same topic, in the illustrious surroundings of the Ecole Normale Supérieure.<sup>2</sup>

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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> George Thomson, 'Preface to the First Edition', in *Studies in Ancient Greek Society: The Pre-Historic Aegean* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1955; first published in 1949), p. 7. Available online at: <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.282877> (accessed 1 October 2019).

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.item.ens.fr/colloque-barthes-2019/>

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