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978-0-521-15524-3 - The Evolution of Strategy: Thinking War from Antiquity to the Present

Beatrice Heuser

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The Evolution of Strategy

Is there a ‘Western way of war’ which pursues battles of annihilation and single-minded military victory? Is warfare on a path to ever greater destructive force? This magisterial new account answers these questions by tracing the history of Western thinking about strategy – the employment of military force as a political instrument – from antiquity to the present day. Assessing sources from Vegetius to contemporary America, and with a particular focus on strategy since the Napoleonic Wars, Beatrice Heuser explores the evolution of strategic thought, the social institutions, norms and patterns of behaviour within which it operates, the policies that guide it and the culture that influences it. Ranging across technology and warfare, total warfare and small wars as well as land, sea, air and nuclear warfare, she demonstrates that warfare and strategic thinking have fluctuated wildly in their aims, intensity, limitations and excesses over the past two millennia.

BEATRICE HEUSER holds the Chair of International History at the School of Politics and International Relations, University of Reading. Her publications include *Reading Clausewitz* (2002); *Nuclear Mentalities?* (1998) and *Nuclear Strategies and Forces for Europe, 1949-2000* (1997), both on nuclear issues in NATO as a whole, and Britain, France, and Germany in particular.

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*In memory of Julian Chrysostomides
1928–2008
scholar, teacher, friend*

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A note on referencing

For the purposes of this book, I needed to adapt Harvard-style referencing, as it was not designed with archival or internet sources in mind, nor for ancient or medieval manuscripts that were first printed centuries after they were written, and translated later still. My references serve as a shorthand for indicating the original date when a text was written; any additional date refers to the translation I have used, so that for example (Anon. 6th c./1985: 10–135) refers to the sixth-century anonymous text *Peri Strategias* translated and edited by George Dennis in *Three Byzantine Military Treatises* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1985), pp. 10–135; this full information can be found in the bibliography. Where only a later edition was available to me, this is indicated in the bibliography; nevertheless, the earlier date is given as the in-text references in order keep these short, even where the page reference applies to the later edition. With key texts which have been reprinted many times, however, I have adopted the classicists' convention of referring to book, chapter and verse rather than to page numbers. Finally, 'q.i.' stands for 'quoted in'; 't.i.' stands for 'text printed in'.