Katherine Harloe and Neville Morley, eds. *Thucydides and the Modern World: Reception, Reinterpretation and Influence from the Renaissance to the Present.*

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In the early modern period historians played a major role in the development of political thinking. From Petrarch onward, the humanists had a great interest in the writings of many ancient historical authors. The work of Livy especially was used as a source in which they found exemplary figures, timeless speeches, and models of action to which they turned for their personal lives. These elements played a crucial role in political advice literature. Later on, from Machiavelli and Guicciardini onward, Tacitus was hailed as the new model, since his works were considered to be the fountainhead of prudence. History as he presented it was an instrument to find out what was true and useful, not necessarily correlated to ethical standards. Many authors relied on Tacitus's historiographical works to penetrate the political heart of their government, to unravel the mysteries of state, and to come to grips with the play of simulation and dissimulation. This gave rise to a whole movement that is indicated as Tacitism.

Generally speaking, relatively more research has been done with regard to the role of Latin historians in the development of Western political thinking. Studies of Greek historians in this development have stayed more in the background. The present collection on the reception of Thucydides, edited by Katherine Harloe and Neville Morley, offers a welcome contribution to our understanding of this Greek historian's place in the history of early modern political thought. Even more, the book focuses on Thucydides's position in modern political thought. As is less known among scholars of classical antiquity, he plays a major role in the study of international relations, where he is considered the intellectual father of the realist approach. Thus it comes as no surprise to find extrapolations on, for example, the relation between Thucydides and the desirability of the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

As has been pointed out in the introduction, Thucydides was not so much an important figure in the tradition that saw history as a storehouse of examples. As long as history was more or less synonymous with the famous *adagium* that it was a discipline that taught by example, authors like Polybius and Plutarch were eagerly read and cited. The way in which Thucydides was read in the early modern period — although it must be emphasized that there was no univocal way, but many readings and interpretations, which, moreover, were not all at the same time or in all

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contexts present — was "as a perceptive analyst of politics and society, revealing the underlying principles that governed relations between people and between states" (3). For this reason it is not strange to find Thucydides as foremost in the list of Greek authors whom Justus Lipsius recommended for the acquisition of political wisdom, just as Tacitus was the unchallenged champion among the Latin authors.

Given that many thinkers turned to Thucydides when they dealt with relations between people and states, and when they delved into the causes of war and applied themselves to the ethics of preemptive assault, the question presents itself to what degree it would be justified to say that, albeit a bit anachronistically, Tacitus served as the author for internal politics, whereas Thucydides was the model for external, or international, politics. It would have been an interesting question within the framework of this book. But let there be no misunderstanding: this collection of high-standing studies is a valuable addition to our understanding of the reception, reinterpretation, and influence of Thucydides. Besides the contributions of early modern humanists on the one hand, and Thucydides's place in international relations on the other, studies also focus on his role in the shaping of attitudes toward democracy in revolutionary and postrevolutionary France; his influence on nineteenth-century German historiography; his impact on major nineteenth-century British political thinkers; the afterlife of the Periclean epitaphios; and the Greek translation of Thucydides in the difficult period 1921–28 after the defeat of the Greek army in the Asia Minor campaign. Thucydides and the Modern World covers a larger period than the one on which this journal focuses. However, it contains many insightful materials that will expand our understanding of early modern political thought. At the same time it shows that a classical author may be of great influence on our political thinking, even after the Renaissance.

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