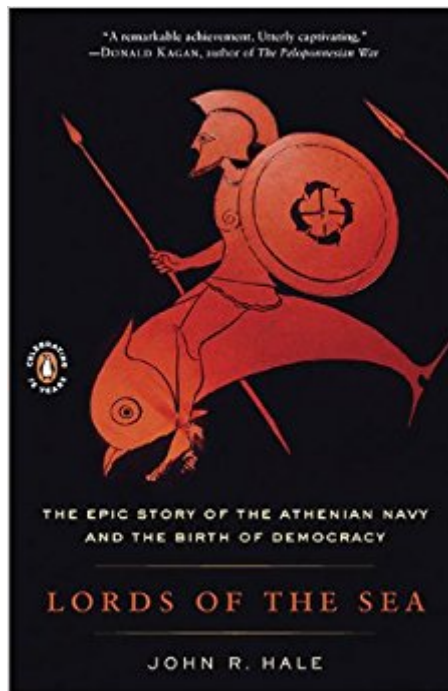




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# Lords Of The Sea: The Epic Story Of The Athenian Navy And The Birth Of Democracy



## Synopsis

The epic true story of Æ Æ Themistocles and the Battle of Salamis, and a Æ Æ rousing history of the world's first dominant navy and the towering empire it builtThe Athenian Navy was one of the finest fighting forces in the history of the world. It engineered a civilization, empowered the world's first democracy, and led a band of ordinary citizens on a voyage of discovery that altered the course of history. With *Lords of the Sea*, renowned archaeologist John R. Hale presents, for the first time, the definitive history of the epic battles, the fearsome ships, and the men-from extraordinary leaders to seductive rogues-that established Athens's supremacy. With a scholar's insight and a storyteller's flair, Hale takes us on an unforgettable voyage with these heroes, their turbulent careers, and far-flung expeditions, bringing back to light a forgotten maritime empire and its majestic legacy.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Historian and archeologist Hale brings both skill sets to bear in this account of an Athens whose golden age and democratic institutions depended on its navy. Between 489 and 322 B.C., Athens built, ruled and lost an empire extending from the Aegean to the Black Sea. The sea permeated every sphere of Athenian life, and most well-known Athenians were identified with sea power: Thucydides and Sophocles commanded fleets. The fleets were based on triremes, reflecting a doctrine favoring the craft and cunning of the steersman and rowers over brute force. Those skills were a product of the commitment and cooperation of free men who played an increasing role in Athenian politics at the expense of those better off and higher born. In times of crisis, all free adult males were expected to board the triremes. Athens's rule of the sea came to an end when a cabal

of aristocrats betrayed the fleet to the Macedonians. And that was possible only because the mysterious spiritual essence sustaining Athenian effort and sacrifice had been lost as well. (June)  
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Hale has enjoyed a career as an archaeologist, including underwater searches for ancient warships. Here he examines the origins, growth, and campaigns of the great Athenian fleet, which helped make Athens the most powerful polis in Greece for most of the fifth century BC. After the defeat of the Persian army at Marathon in 490 BC., the Archon Themistocles urged his fellow citizens to build a large fleet to counter further Persian invasions. Financed by the windfall of silver from the nearby mines at Laurium, the Athenians soon constructed a fleet of over 300 triremes, the most advanced naval vessels in the eastern Mediterranean. Athenian naval supremacy held the Persians at bay and formed the basis for the Delian League, used by Athens to build a maritime empire. Hale follows the campaigns of the fleet through the Peloponnesian War and the supremacy of the Macedonians under Alexander the Great. His efforts to link Athenian naval growth to the growth of democratic institutions will be disputed by many historians. Still, this is a well-written, stirring chronicle. --Jay Freeman --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Although I have read a good deal of military history in the past 35 years, I almost did not try this book. Some good books have come out lately retelling stories of well known naval campaigns from a different emphasis and I was not ready for another one of those trying to make a whole book out of Salamis. But most of the material in this book was totally new to me. Yes, the battle of Salamis and its far-reaching influence on the development of western civilization is well known. But of the naval battle that immediately preceded it, I was largely ignorant. And after Xerxes' invasion, when you think the climax of the book would have already come, you aren't even half-way through the book. It goes on to describe many naval and combined naval-marine campaigns in detail, most of which were new to me. And it brings to life briefly many accomplished Greek fleet commanders who were new to me, also. You circle through the eastern Mediterranean from Salamis to Macedon, to Byzantium, to Sinope, down the coast of Asia Minor, up the Nile through Lower Egypt, across to Sicily, up to Corfu, and through the Peloponnese back to Athens. In the process the Author covers many aspects beyond the battles and the tactics such as ship construction, the place of the sailors in society, emancipation of slaves through naval service, the trophies and use of the proceeds of naval supremacy. The book has good maps and other illustrations. The Author, although an

Academic, wrote a very readable and entertaining book. It was actually a joy to read. I first purchased the MP3 recording to listen to while exercising but I hadn't quite finished it before I had to purchase the hard back: not only to more comprehensively read the story, but where else are you going to find a map of the battle of Goat River? Having given a few other recent books a "5", I would have given this one a "7" if I could have. My compliments also to .com for advertising the book and the MP3 recording well before their release. I waited until I saw the first few reviews posted before I thought it was a good bet. I hope this review in turn encourages someone else to plunge into the Aegean.

Wow. This is non-fiction at its finest. John Hale provides a magnificent, educational, and thoroughly entertaining general history of the Athenian navy. *Lords of the Sea* follows the navy from its first crowning achievement under Themistocles at the Battle of Salamis to its ultimate subjugation to the Kingdom of Macedonia. Along the way, Hale mentions major military actions, important and interesting sailors, and political intrigue, as well as how Athenian culture reflected its navy. I highly, highly recommend this book!

John Hale has set himself an ambitious goal to chronicle the history of the Athenian Navy from the days of the Persian Wars until the final surrender to the Macedonians. This is a mighty task and for the most part, Hale is up to the challenge. John Hale is a naval archaeologist who has dedicated a long and productive career to the study of the Greek and Roman maritime world. Not only a serious scholar, Hale is also a gifted writer with a talent for vividly resurrecting a long gone world. My only criticism is that Hale has bitten off too much history to condense into one volume. The role of the Athenian Navy in the Persian Wars, the Peloponnesian War and the rise of Alexander the Great are all worthy of individual books. I wish that Hale had followed the example of Donald Kagan who wrote a multi-volume history of the Peloponnesian War. One can only hope that such an engaging writer will in the future go back and tell the story of the rise and fall of the Athenian Navy in a more measured way.

I don't want to leave the impression that the author is not a scholar as he most assuredly is. However this is a delightful read, written by an author who is not only intimately knowledgeable about the subject but is obviously enamored of it. His description of the characters and events, especially the battles and heroes thereof, is fantastic. He puts you at the scene next to Themistocles as he plans the Greek navies strategy while dealing with the doubters and dissension

around him or seated next to the " King of Kings " , the great Persian king , as he watches his navy encounter the seemingly overwhelmed Greeks route his navy and destroy his very best land troops. Wow! He takes you there. That ability is a gift that few historians have acquired . Buy it , read it, I promise you won't be disappointed .

Awesome book. It really takes you back and immerses you in the culture of ancient Athens. I had heard before about "Athens' navy and Sparta's army", but those were always light on details and only really mentioned the battle of Salamis. You really get the scoop on many more battles, and how the focus on the navy affected the overall culture and social fabric of Athens. Remarkable and fascinating, a must read for any ancient Greek fan.

It's rare that, upon finishing a work of straightforward history, I should feel bereft ... but I have to admit that is precisely what I felt when I finished reading Hale's "Lords of the Sea." For a couple of weeks I went to bed every night looking forward to great story-telling in service to an apparently bottomless knowledge of Greece's "Golden Age." Hale is a national treasure. May his tribe increase.

Beautifully written synopsis of the history of Athens seen as the the history of its naval ascendancy, and the accompanying ascent of the people who supplied the manpower for the navy. Just read page xxiii and you will be hooked. A dessert which you deserve after reading Thucydides on much the same subject -- but don't skip the main course OR the dessert.

I had just finished listening to Donald Kagan's "History of the Peloponnesian War" when this arrived. This was an absolute delight. It is an excellent supplement to any study of the Peloponnesian War. It covers the development on the great democratic surge in Athens and follows it down to the deportation of 60% of the Athenian population by the Macedonians. A great book.

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