

1988

The Fall of the Athenian Empire

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Recommended Citation

Parker, Brance (1988) "The Fall of the Athenian Empire," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 41 : No. 3 , Article 15.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol41/iss3/15>

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after reading it, one is left with the impression that current generals might learn more from Japanese business leaders than from the commanders of history. Perhaps that disconnection with the past is what Mr. Keegan best points out.

Finally, a bit of Wellingtonian attention to detail would have been helpful in the preparation of this book. Correction of the many typographical errors and the inclusion of publishers in the bibliography would enhance the utility of a second edition.

RICHARD E. RIEDER
Captain, U.S. Naval Reserve

Kagan, Donald. *The Fall of the Athenian Empire*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1987. 456pp. \$39.50

Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* has been core reading at the Naval War College for many years. As a study of the relationship between policy and strategy, the work is invaluable. Readers, however, have had to contend with the realization that many of the events described are colored by Thucydides' view of the world. Donald Kagan's previous three volumes on the war have gone a long way in clarifying the events of the battle between Athens and Sparta. In this fourth and final volume of his narrative history of the war, Professor Kagan has continued his analysis of the events chronicled by Thucydides. By balancing Thucydides'

account with those written by ancient observers such as Xenophon and Diodorus, the author has greatly augmented our understanding of the events in the war. Professor Kagan picks up his narrative following the disastrous defeat of the Athenians in Sicily and takes the reader through to the final defeat of Athens at the hands of Sparta and her allies in 404 B.C. He contends that, and provides sufficient evidence to support his view, after Sicily the extent and length of the war were less a result of Athenian efforts than the failure of the Spartans to capitalize on the Athenian disaster.

Although the defeat at Sicily was viewed with great alarm in Athens, its effect on the empire and the subsequent reaction of the Persians resulted in the final defeat of Athens. The revolt of the empire, and the extensive financial support of Sparta by the Persians created serious financial constraints on Athens. As Kagan points out, the failure of the Athenian commander to engage the Spartan Fleet at Miletus in 412 B.C. cost Athens the opportunity to crush the revolt of the empire before it could spread. As the revolt expanded, the Athenian economy was less and less able to sustain the economic demands of the war. Once the Persians committed themselves to the financial support of Sparta, the weakness of the Athenian economic position became apparent. The Spartan strategy of depriving Athens of the Ukraine grain traffic and collection of tribute from members of her empire left Athens with few

alternatives. Every competent Athenian naval commander must have prepared for battle with the realization that, much like Jellicoe in a later war, he had the capability to lose the war in a single day.

The political disarray in Athens, resulting from the defeat in Sicily, combined with the revolt of the empire, is extensively analyzed. The circumstances surrounding the oligarchic coup and the subsequent restoration of the Athenian democracy serve to clarify many of the attendant problems Athens experienced in insuring that her military forces were properly led. In particular, Kagan goes to great lengths to analyze and trace the checkered career of Alcibiades.

Despite the disaster at Sicily and the rapidly deteriorating economic situation, Athens still managed significant naval victories over her Spartan foes. The extent of those defeats twice led Sparta to propose an end to hostilities. In spite of her serious condition, Athens twice refused to stop fighting. Kagan suggests that Athenian disappointment with the Spartan adherence to the ill-fated Peace of Nicias may have influenced the Athenians to reject the opportunity to end the war and thus retain what remained of the empire. The battle of Aegospotami resulted in a crushing Athenian defeat, one from which her depleted treasury permitted no recovery.

The Peloponnesian War was a classic battle between a land power and a sea power. Victory would eventually come to the power

retaining its acknowledged superiority while making inroads against its opponent's strength. Sicily provided the opportunity that Sparta required. How the Spartans accomplished their objective, in spite of themselves, has been superbly crafted in this work. It is eminently readable and a valuable addition to a more complete understanding of the course of this war.

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Durkin, Joseph T. *Confederate Navy Chief: Stephen R. Mallory*. Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1987. 446pp. \$19.95

Still, William N., Jr. *Iron Afloat: The Story of Confederate Armorclads*. Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1987. 262pp. \$19.95

For all the thousands of volumes published on the military campaigns of the American Civil War, there are relatively few on the history of the naval war and even fewer about the Confederate Navy. It is therefore pleasant to welcome two major works about the Confederate Navy, both of them part of the "Classics of Maritime History" series reprinted by the University of South Carolina Press.

Joseph Durkin's biography of Stephen Mallory originally appeared in 1954. Long considered one of the Confederacy's ablest Cabinet officials, Mallory emerges in this account as a self-taught and highly