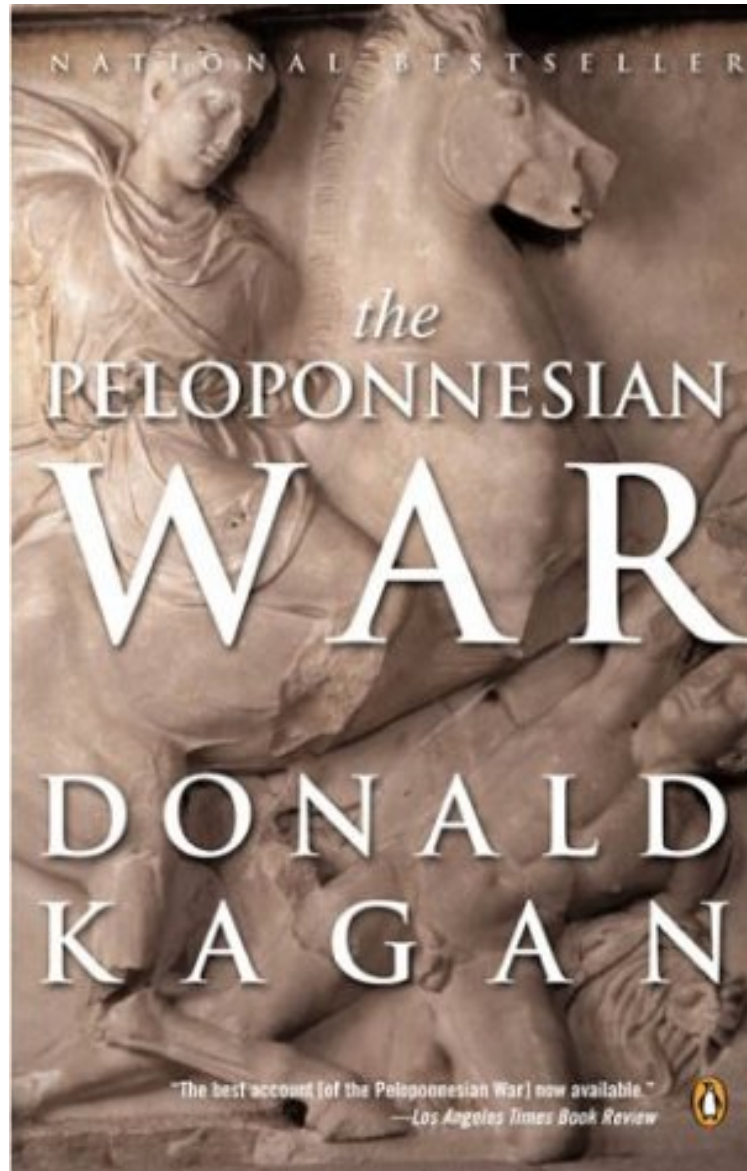


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The Peloponnesian War

Donald Kagan

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Donald Kagan : The Peloponnesian War before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Peloponnesian War:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Better than fiction - Can't wait for Kindle version By E. Montalban This book is amazing. The story underlying it is amazing, and the writing is superb - clear, flowing, and with appropriate detail and connections drawn. If you appreciate history you may be amazed at some of the events that

are so epic, morally significant, and poetic as to sound far-fetched. The plot is quite thick at times. If you really can only read non-stop action pulp fiction, you probably aren't reading this review anyway, but this may come as close as you can get in non-fiction. I wish someone would make a movie with the same sensibility, it would be an instant classic. I also wish this book would come out on Kindle so one could search and highlight it. There are a lot of classic elements to this story, in every sense of the word. It's so good I want to read his four-volume treatment to see what I missed. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. **STUDYING HISTORY ALWAYS WORTH** By LUIS BARCENAS Donald Kagan did a great job, accurately merging description and strategic analysis. The only weak point is that maps are a little bit too simplistic, and not always well connected to the events they are supposed to illustrate. Anyway, I assume that this is a cheap edition, and that the strategic analysis and the description of the decision making processes compensate this weakness. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. **A Great Condensation** By Philip S. Taylor This is a wonderfully written condensation of a huge, seminal work by Kagan written over a 25 year period. Most of the information was gleaned from the Greek general/historian Thucydides from first hand accounts that are largely unbiased. This piece of history is unique. A must read for those interested in history relating to war and politics.

For three decades in the fifth century b.c. the ancient world was torn apart by a conflict that was as dramatic, divisive, and destructive as the world wars of the twentieth century: the Peloponnesian War. Donald Kagan, one of the world's most respected classical, political, and military historians, here presents a new account of this vicious war of Greek against Greek, Athenian against Spartan. The Peloponnesian War is a magisterial work of history written for general readers, offering a fresh examination of a pivotal moment in Western civilization. With a lively, readable narrative that conveys a richly detailed portrait of a vanished world while honoring its timeless relevance, *The Peloponnesian War* is a chronicle of the rise and fall of a great empire and of a dark time whose lessons still resonate today.

From Publishers Weekly Beginning in 1978, Kagan's publication of the four-volume *History of the Peloponnesian War* established him as the leading authority on that seminal period in Greek history. Despite its accessible writing style, however, the work's formidable length tended to restrict its audience to the academic community. This single volume, based on the original's scholarship but incorporating significant new dimensions, is intended for the educated general reader. Kagan, a chaired professor of classics and history at Yale, describes his intention to offer both intellectual pleasure and a source of the wisdom so many have sought by studying this war. On both aims he succeeds admirably. The war between the Athenian Empire and the Spartan Alliance, fought in the last half of the 5th century B.C., was tragedy. Fifty years earlier, the united Greek states had defeated the Persian Empire and inaugurated an era of growth and achievement seldom matched and never surpassed. The Peloponnesian War, however, inaugurated a period of brutality and destruction unprecedented in the Greek world. Like the Great War in 1914-1918, participants recognized even while the fighting went on that things were changing utterly. The contemporary history written by Thucydides is the best source for this complex story, but not the only one, and much of the value of this work lies in Kagan's brilliant contextualization of his ancient predecessor's work. The volume's ultimate worth, however, lies in the perceptive, magisterial judgment Kagan brings to his account of the war that ended the glory that was ancient Greece. Kagan gives us neither heroes and villains nor victors and victims. What infuses his pages is above all a sense of agency: men making and implementing decisions that seemed right at the time however they ended. Such lessons will not be lost on contemporary readers. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist *Starred* Yale historian Kagan is the author of several books on the Peloponnesian War, including a four-volume set that is a leading academic work on the conflict between Athens and Sparta in the fifth century B.C.E. His latest mass-market book is likewise truly impressive, presenting a thorough, yet concise, erudite, yet accessible, narrative encompassing ancient Greece's 30-year Great War. His primary source is, of course, Thucydides' epic history, but Kagan draws on Aristotle, Xenophon, and others to provide an objective, nuanced perspective on the military drama. And it's quite a drama: the clash of democracy and oligarchy, the testing of great leaders, the innovative military tactics, and the unprecedented human cost. The Peloponnesian War has been likened to World War I and the Cold War--both themselves dramatic, paradigm-shifting clashes of civilizations--but Kagan wisely lets his readers make these connections for themselves. It is to the author's great credit that the war's many characters and places are presented accessibly enough to feel relevant to modern events, two and a half millennia later. Don't worry, Thucydides fans, the classic is safe. But Kagan's history is excellent. Brendan Driscoll Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "The best account [of the Peloponnesian War] now available." Los Angeles Times Book "A fresh, clear and fast-moving account... for general readers." The New York Times Book "Drawing on incomparable knowledge as a classicist, international relations theorist and military historian, Donald Kagan... has devoted a single volume to guiding us through that epic of miscalculation, hubris and strategic overreach, supplying supplemental observations and correctives to Thucydides classic *History of the Peloponnesian War*." The Washington Post