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By Vincent Gabrielsen

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This study posits that the distinction of Hellenistic Rhodes, exemplified by economic prosperity, internal stability, military might and high political esteem among foreign powers, can be directly linked to the naval aristocracy. The book contends that a constantly publicised pride in naval experience was paramount to the self-perception of the upper class. It was the basis of their role in the military, political and commercial infrastructure. By analysing the role of the wealthy, who personally owned the ships used both for warfare and commerce, their financial responsibility for personnel, and the ramifications of this power, Gabrielsen explains the organisation of the society as a whole. By providing economic security, the aristocracy promoted domestic peace that, in turn, allowed for expansion overseas, thereby re-securing their own power and labour forces. The navy safeguarded mercantile routes.

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