

Ellen Krefting and Gard Paulsen

THE OCEAN

A HISTORY OF IDEAS



Original title: *Havet – En idéhistorie*

Publisher: Kagge, 2025

Category: Non Fiction

Pages: 368

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Egypt, Afaq Publishing House

The ocean has always held a unique fascination. It has been seen as both a force of danger and a source of riches, a free passage and a contested space.

Covering centuries of maritime history and stretching into today's debates about ocean exploitation and protection, this book is both a cultural odyssey and a timely reflection: Do we truly control the ocean — or will it always elude our grasp?

The book takes readers on a voyage among sea monsters and apocalyptic floods, slave ships and pirates of the triangular trade, legendary shipwrecks, Hanseatic merchants, whalers, and marine surveyors. We encounter the sea as a symbol of freedom for adventurers, as well as a field of inquiry for scientists.

In this richly illustrated volume, the Authors explore how humans have lived with, understood, imagined, exploited, and tried to control the ocean throughout history.

The Ocean is a masterpiece. Beautifully written, beautifully composed. A sea current in itself, filled with deep immersion in the most essential of subjects, linking the tear in our eye to the great blue — the condition of our existence.

Sverker Sörlin, Apollon

It inspires a desire to plunge in—if not into the sea itself, then certainly into the ideas and imaginings that surround it. Krefting and Paulsen demonstrate that deep, expansive knowledge of the subject can sit beautifully alongside graceful, engaging prose.

Morgenbladet

...succeeds in conveying research with a sense of storytelling... The book also offers a generous selection of drawings, paintings, photographs and—last but not least—sea charts. In this way, the book becomes a magnificent work of art.

Klassekampen

Ellen Krefting and Gard Paulsen



Ellen Krefting is a Professor of History of Ideas at the University of Oslo. She has published several books on history of ideas, including *Literary Citizenship in Scandinavia in the Long Eighteenth Century*.

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