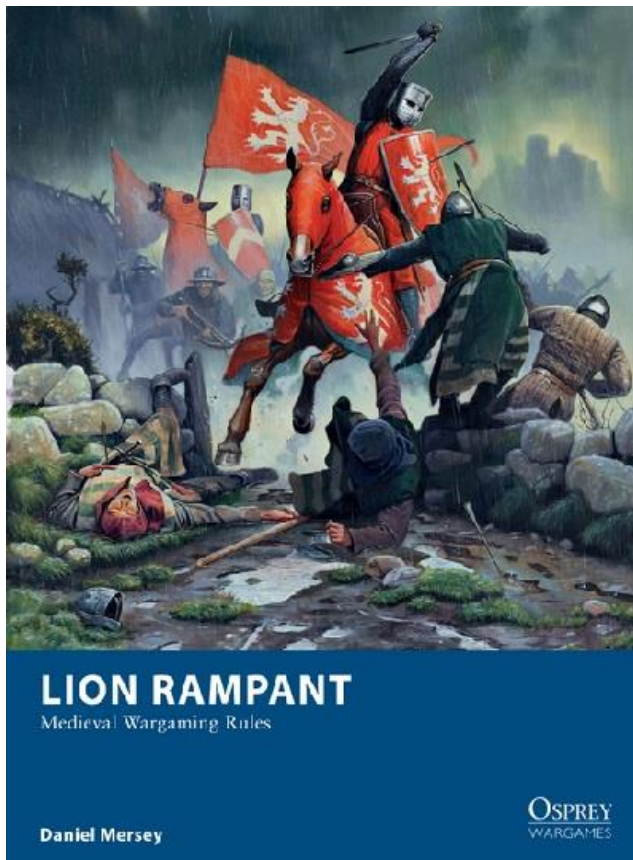


# **Lion Rampant, Osprey Wargames 8 (2014) & Dragon Rampant, Osprey Wargames 13 (2015)**

**Both by Daniel Mersey; illustrated by Mark Stacey  
(both) & Craig Spearing & Ru-Mor (Dragon)**

## **Review by Paul Le Long**

I decided to review these Ospreys in a different way because they are not like the usual Osprey fare. I also thought I would review them as a single entity because they share a lot in common and the core rules first set out in Lion are simply repeated verbatim in Dragon. The author is quite open about this and there is enough that is distinctive about Lion and Dragon that makes it worthwhile to buy both.



Lion came first and is solidly historical, medieval wargaming. Dragon followed because the author realised that the rules could be used for fantasy games. (Lion had 2 light-hearted fantasy army lists among all the historical ones and from those lists the idea for Dragon was born.) Though each book stands on its own, you could view Lion as the core game rules while Dragon is the fantasy expansion.

The focus of the rules is small battle/large skirmish. For example, the army list for 'Early English' in Lion gives you 2 units of mounted men at arms (knights) of 6 figures in each unit; 2 units of foot sergeants (12 figures each) and 1 unit of archers (12 figures). Lion has 12 scenarios, Dragon has 7. Both have army lists (many, but basic). Both books contain rules of course of which are identical

for the most part and both have sections explaining the troop types. Troop types differ between books of Dragon simplifies the human medieval types while giving more space to the fantasy extras of just as you'd expect. There are also extras in Dragon of spell casting for example.

What about the rules? I think they are superbly elegant. Turn sequence is IGO-UGO but player A has to roll for each of his units as he activates them ó if he fails, that unit stays put and his turn is over and player B gets to go. So you have to prioritise which units you want to move as some are harder to activate than others. Units have to roll over a certain target number to hit and damage is dealt depending on the quality/armour of the defender. Let's take an example:



## DRAGON RAMPANT

Fantasy Wargaming Rules

Daniel Mersey

OSPREY  
WARGAMES

Player A wants a unit of mounted knights (6 figures) to attack Player B's archers. Knights can attack if you can roll 5 or more on 2D6 (they are keen on charging). Player A rolls 7 so off they go. They hit the archers and now they can attack ó the knights roll 12d6 (all troops roll 12 dice, unless they have been reduced to half strength, in which case they roll 6 dice). The knights will hit on any roll of 3 or more. Let's say they get 8 hits. Archers have an armour value of 2 -- which means it takes 2 hits to kill every archer ó so in this case 4 of them go down.

But the archers do get to fight back ó when defending (as they are in this instance) they hit on any roll of 5 or more on their 12 dice. Let's say they get lucky and score 6 hits. Looking good ó but wait ó the knights have an armour value of 4

which means that 4 of the 6 hits take down 1 knight while the other 2 hits are wasted. By the time the next turn comes around we have 5 knights facing off against 8 archers.

There are other rules which add chrome but that's the basic mechanism. And I think it works very well. Everything is handled with a light touch ó the emphasis is on rough and ready, enjoyable gaming that doesn't make your brain ache. Scenarios are the key as well, rather than stand-up, knock-down slugfests. The tone of both books is light and breezy and doesn't take itself too seriously. That's especially true of Dragon which also promotes a distinctly old-school feel ó a player who fields a force of miniatures of pre-1984 vintage earns extra victory points!

You will not like the books if:

- i. You want big battles
- ii. You don't like fantasy (Dragon) or medieval (Lion)

- iii. You want a very serious, rules-heavy, tournament style approach

You will like the books if:

- i. You like small games with about 50-60 miniatures on each side
- ii. You like scenario-driven encounters
- iii. You like an old-school approach (especially Dragon)
- iv. You want a simple (but elegant) game that flows quickly (but accurately ó Lion) without getting bogged down in detail

If you're into either medieval or fantasy games but not both, then you could just buy either Lion or Dragon. Even if you like both types of game but are on a tight budget, honestly you could probably just buy one of the books and adapt from there ó if you were doing this, I'd probably advise buying Dragon as it has a little more breadth. I bought both books and don't regret it at all ó I think they complement each other very well and you can very easily mix and match between the two.

I highly recommend both books.