

Renaissance War Galley 1470-1590
Osprey New Vanguard series No. 62 (2002)
Text by Angus Konstam; illustrated by Tony Bryan

Readers in the UK will be aware of the various outlets which sell Osprey titles remaindered at significant discounts. Forget-me-Not books is one and, in the West and Wales, TroutMark always carries a range of titles at a fairly standard £4.95 each. I picked this one up in the Cardiff branch a week ago.

It's by Angus Konstam, these days very much an in-house Osprey writer, and for the most part a sound one; though I'd suggest reading this booklet in conjunction with *Oared Fighting Ships* by the great R.C. Anderson, and *Gunpowder & Galleys* by Guilmartin. American readers will of course know Admiral Rodgers' excellent, almost legendary *Naval Warfare Under Oars*, 70 years old now but a cracking title to develop this taster.

The sections of the book deal with galley construction, logistics and organisation, as well as the historical development of the type. But it's the chapters on ordnance and tactics that provide the most useful section for naval wargamers, even if as Konstam rightly indicates, little detail is known about the armament of Ottoman galleys, it's a tale well told. The section on tactics is indeed valuable, and of course galley fighting was far more than Lepanto writ-large. There really were some astonishing encounters in the Mediterranean and beyond. At the end of this period, Spinola successfully commanded a powerful Spanish galley fleet in Flanders against Dutch and English enemies.

The term *ogalley* is used to represent a complex group of oared warships, almost as complex in the Renaissance as in Antiquity! From the standard Galley Sotil to the smaller Galliot and a host of small, oared war vessels, the title takes us to the Great Galleys, often well-armed trading vessels, and on to the Lanterna command ship and the awesome Galleass gun platforms. Some useful description is provided for each.

While in support of the text, Tony Bryan provides attractive broadside views as colour plates, with an *exploded* view of a 1571 Spanish Lanterna, which has some valuable terminology, decent information and colour schemes. Look out for Plate B, the Battle of Prevesa 1538, and the scheme and heraldry of a large Venetian Galleon, which is excellent. The bulk of the black and white photographs and illustrations through the text will be well known to all but the novice at sea, but are useful for that.

In terms of wargaming of course, a host of manufacturers make almost everything this title covers! The Tumbling Dice 1/2400th range has 20 very

good, well-based and highly detailed models to represent them all at a reasonable cost. While Rod Langton's 1/1200th has a very fine range of some 23 vessels, but this range sadly is far from being cheap, on either side of the Atlantic! The Skytrex ranges are smaller, less detailed but in 1/1200th are sold less expensively; this company's 1/3000th scale vessels will, in more than a few cases, fit in nicely with Tumbling Dice models.

Of course, if you prefer a much larger scale, in 1/300th (that's 6mm) ERM's lovely Galiot, available in either Christian or Turk mode is ideal -- all you need to do is cram it with Heroics & Ros 6mm troops, from their Renaissance series, and employ Irregular Miniatures 6mm rowing boats similarly added to for support.

All in all, a useful title.

--Rob Morgan

