

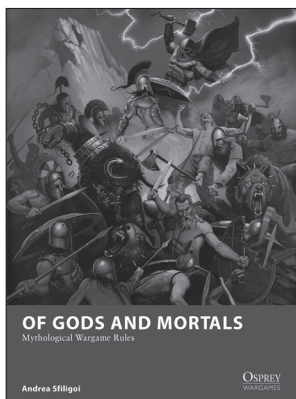
AUTHOR

John Lamshead is a retired senior scientific civil servant who has worked for the British Museum of Natural History, Southampton University, the University of California, and the Royal Society, with more than a hundred scientific articles to his name. He is also an experienced author and game designer, having written for Baen Books, Games Workshop and Warlord Games amongst others.

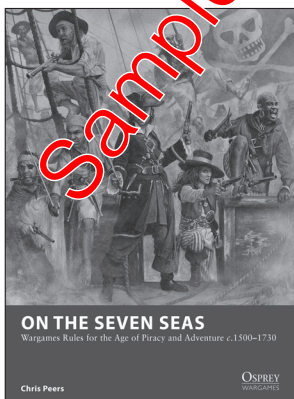
ILLUSTRATOR

Giuseppe Rava was born in Faenza in 1963, and took an interest in all things military from an early age. Entirely self-taught, Giuseppe has established himself as a leading military history artist, and is inspired by the works of the great military artists, such as Detaille, Meissonier, Röchling, Lady Butler, Ottenfeld and Angus McBride. He lives and works in Italy. For more on Giuseppe, please visit his website at www.g-rava.it

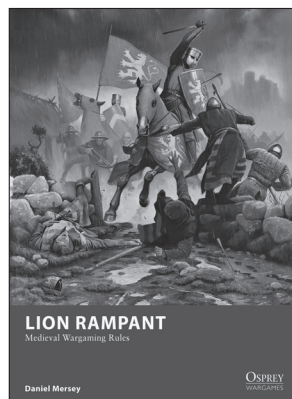
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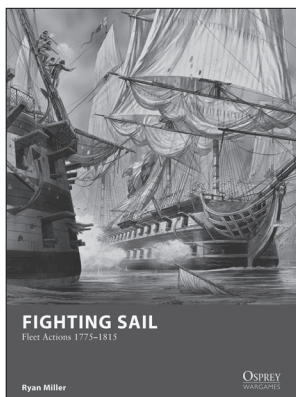
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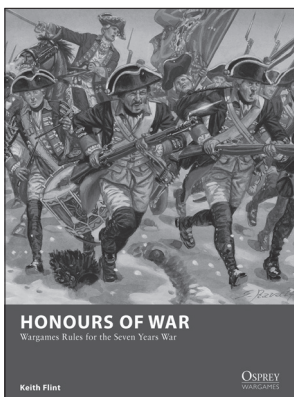
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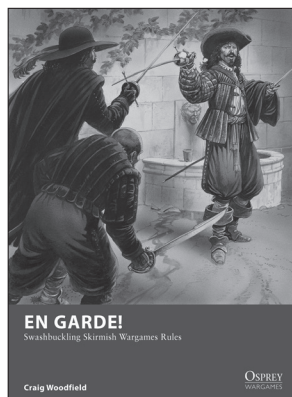
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POSEIDON'S WARRIORS

CLASSICAL NAVAL WARFARE 480–31 BC



JOHN LAMBSHEAD

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Sample file

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	4	GENERIC SCENARIOS	27
		Introduction	27
AN INTRODUCTION TO CLASSICAL WAR GALLEYS	5	Choosing a Scenario	28
Timeline	7	Scenario 1: Invasion	29
		Scenario 2: Between the Rock and the Hard Place	30
THE BASICS	10	Scenario 3: Channel Assault	31
Ships	10	Scenario 4: Channel Dash	32
Player Aids	10	Scenario 5: Harbour Break-In	33
Organising a Fleet	11	Scenario 6: Harbour Break-Out	36
Ship Data Summary	11	CAMPAIGN	38
		HISTORICAL FLEETS AND SCENARIOS	38
TURN SEQUENCE	12	The Trireme Era	45
		The Western Wars Era	50
INITIATIVE PHASE	12	The Hellenistic Naval Era	54
		The Rhodian Era	57
OPERATIONAL PHASE	13	The Pirate Era	59
Movement	13	The Roman Civil Wars	61
Rams	13	Suggested Reading for Scenario Ideas	61
Oar Strikes	14	SOME NOTES ON TACTICS	62
Artillery	15	QUICK REFERENCE SHEET	63
Boarding	16		
Towing	17		
MORALE PHASE	17		
VICTORY	18		
ADVANCED RULES	19		
Unique Ship Capabilities	19		
Leaders	22		
ORGANISING A BATTLE	25		
FREESTYLE SCENARIO	25		
Set-up	25		
Forces	27		
Victory	27		

FOREWORD

This is a set of rules for playing large-scale naval actions between fleets of classical galleys.

Galley combat involved a great deal of sneaky and cunning manoeuvring to position ships to ram an enemy vessel without being rammed in return, especially as so much of the action occurred around coastline or in narrow channels and shallow waters.

Of all naval wargames, ancient war galleys demand the greatest concentration and tactical finesse from players, offering the greatest challenge and providing the most fun of all the warship periods.

Galley warfare is more like a World War II air dogfight than naval combat in the gunpowder or battleship eras because the primary weapon, the ram, is on the bow and thus the whole ship has to be aimed at the target.

These rules use an integrated turn system to recreate the feints and traps employed to tempt the enemy out of position and make his ships vulnerable to a ram. Record-keeping is minimised to maintain a high tempo during game play. Real ancient galleys fought at ramming speed and so do ships in *Poseidon's Warriors*.

Inside are wargame rules, ship data, famous admirals, historical scenarios, a campaign system and hours of historical notes for those who wish to refresh their memory about the weapons, tactics, major battles, campaigns and wars.

Rounding a promontory was often a tricky business in the ancient world so this flotilla of warships is making the transit under oars, while two merchant ships tack in the background. (Models by Langton, photo by author)



AN INTRODUCTION TO CLASSICAL WAR GALLEYS

War galleys had to be fast, manoeuvrable and capable of sailing in any direction irrespective of the wind. The key to the development of the warship was the oar – a paddle lengthened to increase leverage and worked against a fulcrum (rowlock) on the side of the boat.

Classical war galleys were not rowed by slaves, unlike the equivalent Renaissance vessels. The oar crews were free men who expected to be paid for their labours. This meant that running a war fleet was an expensive proposition that needed a healthy cash economy to finance.

Warships had to be light racers to satisfy speed and manoeuvrability specifications. This requirement produced a whole series of knock-on effects: galleys were flimsy so they could not operate on rough seas, they had large crews but minimal cargo carrying capacity so little food or water could be carried, seriously limiting their range. The practice was to dock galleys every night if possible, pulling them stern-first onto a beach if no permanent harbour was available.

Galleys were kept out of the water when not in use as much as possible. Even so, a war galley only had a working lifespan of 25 years at most. A war galley could not stay on station at sea like a Napoleonic ship-of-the-line. It had to operate from a friendly land base nearby where it could be docked or

Carthaginian quinqueremes unfurl their sails as they leave harbour.
(Photo by Langton Miniatures)

