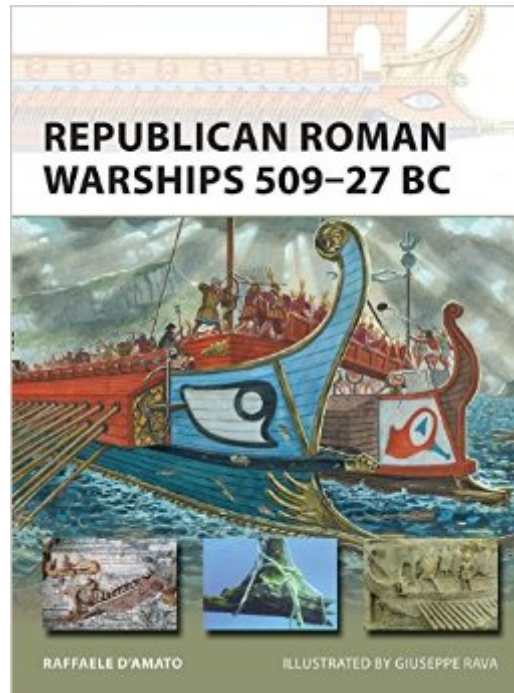


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Republican Roman Warships 509-27 BC (New Vanguard)



Synopsis

The birth of the mighty Roman Navy was anchored in the Romans' extraordinary ability to absorb and perfect the technology of other states and empires. Indeed, during the clash of the great Mediterranean powers in the Punic Wars of the 3rd century, Rome had little or no naval force to speak of, just a humble fleet of the tiny Etruscan Aphraktoi, and it was the Carthaginians who reigned supreme at sea. Yet in a remarkably short space of time, the Romans at first copied, and then surpassed the superior Carthaginian maritime technology, incorporating designs such as the corvus (boarding bridge). Before long, the Carthaginians had been decisively smashed, paving the way for Rome to become the dominant naval power in the Mediterranean for the next seven centuries. This is the story of the design, development and operation of the Republican Roman warship in the age of the conquest of the Mediterranean, from the first Roman naval adventure of 394 BC and the Punic Wars, to Pompey's operations against the Cilician Pirates and Caesar's victorious naval campaigns in Armorica, concluding with the consolidation of the Mediterranean Sea as Mare Nostrum with the battle of Actium in 31 BC. Archaeological photography, including those of exciting new finds, such as the Roman warship rostra (rams) found in the Aegates Islands, accompany lavish artistic reconstructions in illustrating the ships of the first Roman navy.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This title provides a good and relatively comprehensive overview of Rome's navies during the Republic, from its very beginning (allegedly in 509 BC) until the time when Augustus reorganised

the navy and created the Imperial fleets and squadrons in 27 BC. As usual, and given the amount of ground to cover, one should not expect too much detail from a 48 pages booklet because there simply is not enough space to be comprehensive. The book's structure and the various sections that make it up contain " for me at least - just about the right level of detail and information that I was expecting to find in such a title. There are however a few glitches across the book. The first section ("Historical Background") is in fact a short summary of what is known of the Roman navy up to the eve of the First Punic War, in other words, not a great deal. The author has chosen to blend the traditional opinion with regards to the Romans and their Navy " that the Roman Navy was initially small and mostly used for coastal defence and piracy " with another thesis that sees it growing and expanding, mainly by interpreting what is known of the treaties between Rome and Carthage before 264 BC. Regardless of whether one agrees or not, the point is rather well made. One allegation I found a bit surprising and sweeping, however, was the statement that (Italian) Greeks " were rather mediocre fighters on land " during the fourth century BC. The second section presents "Roman ships and fleets", with descriptions for each of the main types of warships, from the smallest to the largest. Also included are useful little pieces on construction and on transport ships. Here again, there are few minor glitches.

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