

TEWKESBURY 1471: The Last Yorkist Victory. Christopher Gravett. Illustrated by Graham Turner. 2003. Osprey Publishing, Oxford, £12.99. ISBN 1-84176-514-7

BOSWORTH 1485: Last Charge of the Plantagenets. Christopher Gravett. Illustrated by Graham Turner. 1999. Osprey Publishing, Oxford, £12.99. ISBN 1-85532-863-1

These two books are both in the Osprey 'Campaign' series and so are similar in organization. The Introduction to the first, *Tewkesbury 1471* says that the series consists of 'Accounts of history's greatest conflicts, detailing the command strategies, tactics and battle experiences of the opposing forces, throughout the crucial stages of each campaign', both books fulfill this promise. Both contain many excellent illustrations from contemporary documents, also photographs of the battlefields today together with excellent and (usually) very clear maps of the routes to the battlefields and plans of the battles themselves. The books also contain paintings by Graham Turner of incidents during the battles and the events leading up to them, which help readers to visualize the occasions. Unfortunately neither book has an index, presumably never called for in this series, and there are also no references, although the source of crucial statements are usually given.

As part of the promised content both books contain two chapters on the commanders and the armies. The former are fairly brief potted biographies of the major commanders, the latter contain a brief discussion of how each commander raised his troops and short but excellent descriptions of the arms and armour equipping the troops. These are as good as would be expected from this author, a Senior Curator at the Royal Armouries. These descriptions are backed up by excellent illustrations. The size of the armies is rather confusingly covered, partly in these chapters and partly on the maps and elsewhere, for example in a chapter called 'Wargaming Bosworth' in *Bosworth 1485*.

Tewkesbury 1471 is actually an account of the battles of both Barnet and Tewkesbury, which of course makes a great deal of sense since in a way they are one battle in two episodes separated by nearly three weeks. The book covers Edward IV's campaign against the earl of Warwick and Margaret of Anjou in the momentous year 1471. The book begins with an Introduction discussing first of all the many contemporary sources for both battles. These sources are rather less cryptic than those for medieval battles usually are and include the very detailed *Arrivall* and Warkworth's *Chronicle*. The largest part of the book is occupied by accounts of the battles although there are clear and brief descriptions of the events leading to Edward IV's triumphant return from exile in Burgundy in March 1471, his march through England to London and on to Barnet on the evening of 13 April 1471.

The battle and its aftermath are described clearly. In the case of the battle of Barnet itself this clarity is important because of the overlap of the battle lines caused by Edward IV setting out his troops in the dark and being unable to see exactly where Warwick had placed his men, which complicates the story. This overlap caused the battle lines to swing counterclockwise during the battle and in the final analysis lost the battle for Warwick. This movement of the battle lines is shown on a map, not entirely clearly and perhaps shows too great a swinging movement of the troops. The original battle lines are placed in the conventional area north of Barnet; some writers are now trying to place the battle lines further to the north of the town of Barnet. These writers also place the duke of Gloucester, on the dubious authority of the *Great Chronicle*, in command of the Yorkist left wing. This book places him on the right wing as usual.

The battle of Tewkesbury, following Barnet so swiftly, is similarly clearly described. The exciting chase of the Lancastrian army by the Yorkists is followed by the description of the battle, well and conventionally (in the sense of following recent consensus) described. Two possible positions are given for the armies, the usual one and a more northerly one nearer to Tewkesbury. I myself believe the southerly one is more likely but as with other similar points in the book the reasons for the positions adopted are argued clearly. The aftermath, which includes a description of the Bastard of Fauconberg's assault on London, is described and is accompanied by a very useful map showing the rather complicated assaults and counter assaults on the London defences.

The second book, *Bosworth 1485*, follows the pattern of the *Tewkesbury* book. A brief description of the routes, by which both the armies of Richard III and of Henry Tudor reached the vicinity of the battlefield, is followed by a discussion of the battle. A note in the Introduction says that the battle 'poses numerous problems, not least of topography, troop formations and positions', a very true comment indeed. The present author follows the traditional accounts by placing Richard's army on Ambion Hill, on the very reasonable grounds that this was strategically the better place, but takes into account the arguments of Peter Foss's book *The Field of Redemore* in his placing of the troops of Henry Tudor and also discusses the whereabouts of the marsh, known to play an important part in the battle. Exactly where this was is disputed although we may hope that the ongoing archaeological work on the battlefield by the Leicester County Council will help to settle the matter. Gravett does not take into account the arguments for the Merevale site since these were published after his book. The book ends with a chapter entitled 'The Aftermath' which not only covers the events immediately following the battle, but deals briefly with Lambert Simnel's and Perkin Warbeck's attempts on behalf of the Yorkists to overthrow the new Tudor dynasty.

In summary these books can be recommended as good concise and well illustrated discussions of the battles and events leading up to and following them.

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