
SANT ANNA

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Data de publicació: 05-06-2014

Career

Owner:

Knights Hospitaller

Launched:

21 December 1522

Fate:

Abandoned 1540

General characteristics

Type:

Carrack

Armament:

50 guns

Santa Anna was an early 16th Century carrack of the Knights Hospitaller. The war ship was celebrated for her many modern features. While some authors view her lead sheathed hull as an early form of ironclad,[1] others regard it primarily as a means to improve her watertightness.[2]

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Career

Santa Anna was launched in Nice on 21 December 1522,[2] one day before the Knights Hospitaller surrendered at the siege of Rhodes (1522) under honorable terms.

Santa Anna's underwater hull was completely sheathed with lead plates. Above the waterline two of the six decks were also armoured with lead plates, which were fastened by bronze nails to the wooden hull. Santa Anna was designed to accommodate 500 marines besides her sailors and she featured large below-deck cabins and messes for her officers. The carrack housed a forge, where three weapon smiths could do maintenance work at sea. The ship even carried several ovens and a mill its own, in order to provide the crew with fresh bread. The ship also featured a garden on board with flowers hanging down from the stern gallery in boxes.[1]

In 1531, Santa Anna routed on its own an Ottoman squadron of 25 ships.[3] One year later, the carrack took part in the expedition against the Peloponnese under the command of Andrea Doria, during which Koroni, Patras and the Turkish fortresses protecting the entry to the Gulf of Corinth were seized.[3] In 1535 Santa Anna fought in the successful campaign of the Spanish fleet under Charles V against Tunis, where the Spaniards managed to capture over 100 ships of the Maghrebinian corsairs.[4] Her firepower contributed significantly in the assault on the fortress La Goulette which controlled the entry to the harbour.[3]

Temporarily, the carrack was also employed as a wheat freighter, with an impressive capacity of up to 900 tons.[1] Only eighteen years after her launch, Santa Anna was stripped and abandoned in 1540 on the order of Grand Master Juan de Omedes.[2]

References

Brennecke 1986, p. 138.

Tailliez, D. "Les Hospitaliers de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem à Nice et Villefranche" [The Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem in Nice and Villefranche]. La Darse Villefranche-sur-mer (in French). Association pour la Sauvegarde du Patrimoine Maritime de Villefranche-sur-Mer. Archived from the original on 2010-07-30.

Pemsel, pp. 144ff..

Brennecke 1986, pp. 144ff..

Bibliography

Brennecke, Jochen (1986). *Geschichte der Schifffahrt* (2nd ed.). Künzelsau. ISBN 3-89393-176-7.

Pemsel, Helmut. *Seeherrschaft. Eine maritime Weltgeschichte von den Anfängen bis 1850* 1. Bernard & Graefe Verlag. pp. 144ff. ISBN 3-89350-711-6.

See also

List of Maltese battleships

Finis Bellis

External links

Tailliez, D. "Les Hospitaliers de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem à Nice et Villefranche" [The Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem in Nice and Villefranche] (pdf). La Darse Villefranche-sur-mer (in French). Association pour la Sauvegarde du Patrimoine Maritime de Villefranche-sur-Mer. Archived from the original on 2007-08-18.

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One of the most interesting ship stamps of this year is undoubtedly the 5p. Jersey stamp of the St. John Ambulance Centenary set for it depicts the Santa Anna, known as "The Great Carrack", the first armour-clad vessel in history, built

especially for the Knights of Malta, at Nice, in 1523. She is considered to be the outstanding example of the culmination of the carrack type which was soon to be replaced by the lower-built and more weatherly galleon. She was described by the Spanish chronicler Friar Don Juan de Funes, who visited the ship in 1533, that she was not only a great ship of war but that she was sometimes used to carry 900 tons of wheat from Sicily or Spain to Malta. The ship had six decks, two below the waterline being covered with lead and fastened by bronze nails, as was also the outside of her lower hull. So strongly was she constructed that her sides could not be penetrated by shot and even a whole fleet would be unable to sink her. A chapel on board was dedicated to St. Anne. Her armoury had equipment for 500 soldiers. The great cabin for the officers had butteries and serving rooms. She even had a garden of shrubs and flowers growing in boxes of earth in her stern galleries. The ship's company had freshly baked bread, not the usual ship biscuits, for she had a windmill and ovens. There was a forge for three blacksmiths or armourers. She mounted 50 heavy guns and numerous light pieces. The friar adds that she sailed and handled well despite being so lofty and was so sound that any water entering her came from above. Her first captain was an Englishman, Sir Thomas Weston, Knight of Malta.

Sea Breezes September 1977 Ernest Argyle

Jersey SG175, Grenada SG3155

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