

For Skill, Valour and Gallantry: Two Swords Presented to Scotsmen for Distinguished Service in Spain in 1805 and 1811

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Claude Blair has written that:

“The practice of making a formal presentation of a special sword, usually suitably inscribed, to a distinguished soldier or sailor does not seem to have started until the second half of the eighteenth century. In England the practice was already established by the outbreak of the war with France in 1793 but it was during this conflict that it became really widespread”.¹

The two swords which I will discuss and illustrate in this paper are both associated with that war.

The first sword is that awarded by the Patriotic Fund to Captain Frederick Lewis Maitland, Royal Navy, in 1805. (Fig. 1).

The Patriotic Fund was established in July 1803 by the insurers Lloyd’s of London. The resolution for its foundation read as follows:

“... to animate the efforts of our defenders by sea and land, it is expedient to raise, by the patriotism of the community at large, a suitable Fund for their comfort and relief ... and [for] granting pecuniary rewards, or honourable badges of distinction, for successful exertions of valour or merit”.²

Of the “honourable badges of distinction” awarded by the Fund, its swords are the best known. These exist in four types, differentiated by their cost to the Fund - £100, £50 and £30: a variant of the £100 sword was

(*) Keeper, Scottish United Services Museum, Edinburgh Castle.

¹ Blair, Claude *Three Presentation Swords in the Victoria and Albert Museum ...* HMSO 1972, p.1.

² *Report of the Committee for Managing the Patriotic Fund, established at Lloyd’s Coffee House, 20th July 1803, 1st March 1804*, p.10.

produced in 1805 to reward ships' captains present at the battle of Trafalgar. Frederick Maitland received a sword costing the Fund £100.

Maitland was born in 1776 and went to sea, as all surviving records say, "at an early age".

He was present at the battle off Ushant on 1st June 1794 and subsequently served in the North Sea and in the Mediterranean. In 1802 he took over command of HMS *Loire*, a captured French frigate, and, in this ship, spent several years cruising in and around the Bay of Biscay as part of the Royal Navy's Atlantic squadrons, the aim of which was to impede or blockade trade to and from French and Spanish ports - Britain being then at war with both Spain and France.

In June 1805, reconnoitring off Cape Finisterre, he received intelligence that a French privateer was fitting out and preparing for sea in Muros Bay (Fig. 2) and, accordingly, prepared to enter the bay in order to capture or sink her. On entering the bay, he found two French ships, not one, and a well-defended anchorage dominated by a fort which immediately began firing accurately at his ship. Anchoring at bombardment range from the fort he began to engage it, while sending a landing party of 50 men under his first lieutenant, James Yeo, to try and neutralise the fort from its landward side. Yeo and his men captured not only a small shore battery but also the much larger fort and made Maitland the master of Muros Bay. The two French ships were taken into British service, Lieutenant Yeo being given command of the larger of the two. In a gesture that probably did much for British-Spanish relations, Maitland agreed to spare the town of Muros from pillage and destruction if the stores of the two French privateers were surrendered. This being agreed, it is said:

"... the bishop and one of the principal inhabitants of Muros came off to the Loire to express their gratitude for the orderly behaviour of the British seamen and marines, who had not, they acknowledged, committed one act of pillage, and to offer to Captain Maitland and his officers every refreshment which the place afforded".³

News of Maitland's action on 4th June reached London three weeks later. Maitland received a vote of thanks from the Common Council of the City of London and both he and Yeo were awarded swords by the Patriotic Fund.

Maitland's sword is the one illustrated here (Fig. 3). As a sword costing £100 (20,000 pesetas) it has a more elaborate scabbard than the cheaper swords. Each of the Patriotic Fund swords had similar hilts, which were made in ivory and ormolu using classical symbols. In order that the swords' recipients should be in no doubt about the iconography incorporated into their swords' hilts (Fig. 4), the swords' maker, Richard Teed, specified it in

³ James, William *Naval History of Great Britain*, MacMillan & Co. Ltd. 1902, Vol. IV p.36.

a label (Fig. 5) which was pasted into the lid of each sword's presentation box: National Union was represented by the fasces forming the quillons; Herculean Efforts were symbolised by the club of Hercules incorporated into the knucklebow; the aid of Wisdom encircling the club was represented by the serpent; the resulting Victory was shown by the skin of the Nemean Lion which formed the backpiece and the Rewards thus gained found expression in the wreath of laurel incorporated into the ferrule at the base of the grip.

The sword's blade is engraved, blued and gilded for its entire length. On one side, a panel bears an inscription (Fig. 6) recording details of the action for which the sword was awarded; this panel is flanked by foliage which—towards the blade's point—incorporates the Royal Cypher of King George m (Fig. 7). On the other side are a trophy of arms, the figure of Victory, a Phoenix rising from flames, a star enclosing Maitland's initials, the British Royal Arms and, finally, Britannia flanked by another trophy and more foliage, (Fig. 8).

The sword's scabbard is also encased in ormolu and also incorporates elements of classical iconography. The two panels on either side are pierced to reveal a blue velvet backing and to show classical and naval trophies. Flanking the panels are medallions. The upper medallion depicts Britannia above the name of Maitland's ship and the date of the action; the central medallion shows Hercules wrestling the Lernaean Hydra and the lower medallion represents him fighting the Nemean Lion. The sword's maker engraved his name and address on the scabbard's throat (Fig. 9)⁴.

Maitland remained actively at sea for most of the rest of the war, serving on the Atlantic station and in Canadian and West Indian waters. In 1815, while in command of HMS *Bellerophon*, he received the surrender of the Emperor Napoleon and conveyed him to England prior to his exile to St Helena. Maitland was knighted in 1830 and died at sea in 1839 in the rank of rear-admiral.

The second half of this paper will be devoted to a sword awarded to Lieutenant-General Thomas Graham, (Fig. 10). He was awarded it by the Common Council of the City of London following the battle of Barrosa in 1811.

Thomas Graham was born in 1748; he was thus aged sixty-three when he led troops in action at Barrosa. Succeeding to his family estates in his late teens, he travelled on the continent of Europe in the early 1770s; while in Rome he was painted by Pompeo Batoni dressed for the field sports which

⁴ For further details of Patriotic Fund swords, and their decoration, those interested are recommended to consult *Patriotic Fund Swords*, parts I and II, by Dr Leslie Southwick in the *Journal* of the British Arms and Armour Society, Vol. XII, No. 4, pp 223-284 (September 1987) and Vol. XII, No. 5, pp 291-311 (March 1988).

he actively enjoyed, (Fig. 11). In 1774 he married The Hon. Mary Cathcart who, a year later, was painted by Thomas Gainsborough, (Fig. 12).

The Grahams divided their time between their estates in Perthshire, the fashionable salons of Edinburgh and London and travel abroad. Mrs Graham died in the south of France in 1792 and her coffin, en route for burial in Scotland, was forced open by National Guardsmen in Toulouse searching for Royalist arms. This act outraged Graham and, after serving as a volunteer in the expedition against Toulon in 1793, he returned home to raise a twobattalion regiment. Graham thus began his military career at the age of forty-six and in the rank of colonel, (Fig. 13). He was to serve in most theatres of the war in Europe.

In 1801 he sailed to join his regiment, which had taken part in the successful Egyptian campaign, and it presented him with a captured *kilic*; while in Egypt he also acquired a samsir which clearly became a favourite sword, (Fig. 14). He carried this sword throughout the Peninsular campaign and cradled it in two of his portraits by Sir Thomas Lawrence, (Figs. 15 and 16). His fondness for this style of sword may have influenced the design of that awarded to him by the City of London.

By 1811 Graham was a lieutenant-general in command of a British force sent to reinforce Cadiz. The heights of Barrosa form a ridge south of Cadiz, (Fig. 17). This ridge was assaulted by a French force of about seven thousand men. It was held by Graham's troops, a mixed body of British, Spanish, Portugese and German soldiers, which was hurriedly formed into two brigades to resist the assault. The French formations, greatly superior in number and often holding higher ground than the allies, were routed, their defeat judged to be the result of Graham's active forward leadership which inspired and directed his troops to attack the larger force with great dash and agression, (Fig. 18).

News of the victory was rapturously received in Britain and Graham was voted the thanks of both Houses of Parliament. A month after the battle the Common Council of the City of London met, bestowed the Freedom of the City upon both Graham and his deputy, Brigadier William Dilkes, and awarded both men swords. Graham's sword was goldmounted and to the value of two hundred guineas (42,000 pesetas), (Fig. 19).

Graham's sword was the first to be awarded by the City in the Turkish style, most previous awards having been in the form of a smallsword. The hilt and scabbard-mounts for the sword were made in 22-carat gold by Thomas Price, a smallworker of 13 Pentonville Street, and the sword was assembled and supplied to the City by Richard Clarke and Son of 62 Cheapside.

The hilt is decorated overall with sprays of laurel and myrtle, (Fig. 20). The quillons are tipped with acorn finials and have lions' heads in rondels at their centres. Gorgons' masks are placed either side of the pommel. It would originally have had a chain knuckle-bow, (Fig. 21), of either loose-

links or —more probably— of twisted and overlapping links (like a horse's bridle's curb-chain). An almost identical sword, with chain knuckle-bow and hilt and scabbard-mounts by the same maker, was awarded to Wellington by the City of London a month later; it is now in the Wellington Museum in London, (Fig. 22).

The blade is falsely damascened and embellished with blue and gilt, (Fig. 23). The figure of Victory decorates one side; an appropriate inscription is placed on the other, (Fig. 24).

The scabbard is of shagreen-covered wood with gold mounts. The upper mount bears the Arms of the City of London (Fig. 25) and those of Thomas Graham, (Fig. 26). Scrutiny of Graham's arms indicates that the scabbard was not finished until after he had been created a Knight Companion of the Order of the Bath in January 1812, since the shield is encircled with the motto of the Order. Similarly, he would not have been entitled to supporters prior to his knighthood. As one of his supporters he chose, in heraldic language, "sinister, a peasant of Andalusia, habited and bearing on the exterior shoulder a hoe proper". The middle mount has medallions with patriotic depictions: Britannia with the British lion rending a French standard torn from its Eagle-topped staff (Fig. 27) and, on the other side, the British lion supporting a Union flag and suWuing with its paw the Eagle of the French 8th regiment of infantry, a trophy captured by the 87th Foot at the battle of Barrosa, (Fig. 28). The chape is pierced, decorated and emblazoned with martial trophies (Fig. 29)⁵.

Thomas Graham later distinguished himself at the capture of Ciudad Rodrigo in 1812 and fought at the battle of Vitoria and siege of San Sebastian in 1813. His conduct at Vitoria earned him the thanks of Parliament, again, and the Cities of London and Edinburgh presented him with gold boxes enclosing Freedom scrolls, the London box (Figs. 30 and 31) specifically mentioning the victory of Barrosa for which he had received his sword. In 1814 he was ennobled as Lord Lynedoch and finished the war, which he had begun as a civilian volunteer, as a general officer covered with decorations. He died, aged ninety-five, in 1843 and was buried in Perthshire beside his wife.

⁵ Swords awarded by the City of London are dealt with in detail in *The Recipients, Goldsmiths and Costs of the Swords presented by the Corporation of the City of London*, by Dr Leslie Southwick, *Journal of the British Arms and Armour Society*, Vol. XIII, No. 3, pp. 173-220 (March 1990). I willingly record my thanks to Dr Southwick for his assistance in relation to the sword presented to General Graham.



Fig. 1.—*Captain Frederick Lewis Maitland, Royal Navy, 1815.*
Reproduced by courtesy of the National Museums of Scotland.



Fig. 2.—Muros Bay and Galicia, from Lopez's Mapa Geografico del Reyno de Galicia... 1784. Reproduced by courtesy of the National Library of Scotland.

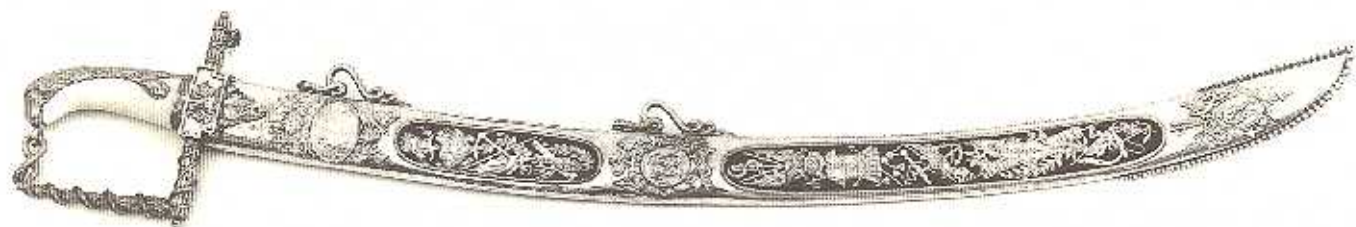


Fig. 3.—Sword of £100 value presented to Captain F. L. Maitland, R.N., by Lloyd's Patriotic Fund, 1805.
Reproduced by courtesy of the National Museums of Scotland.

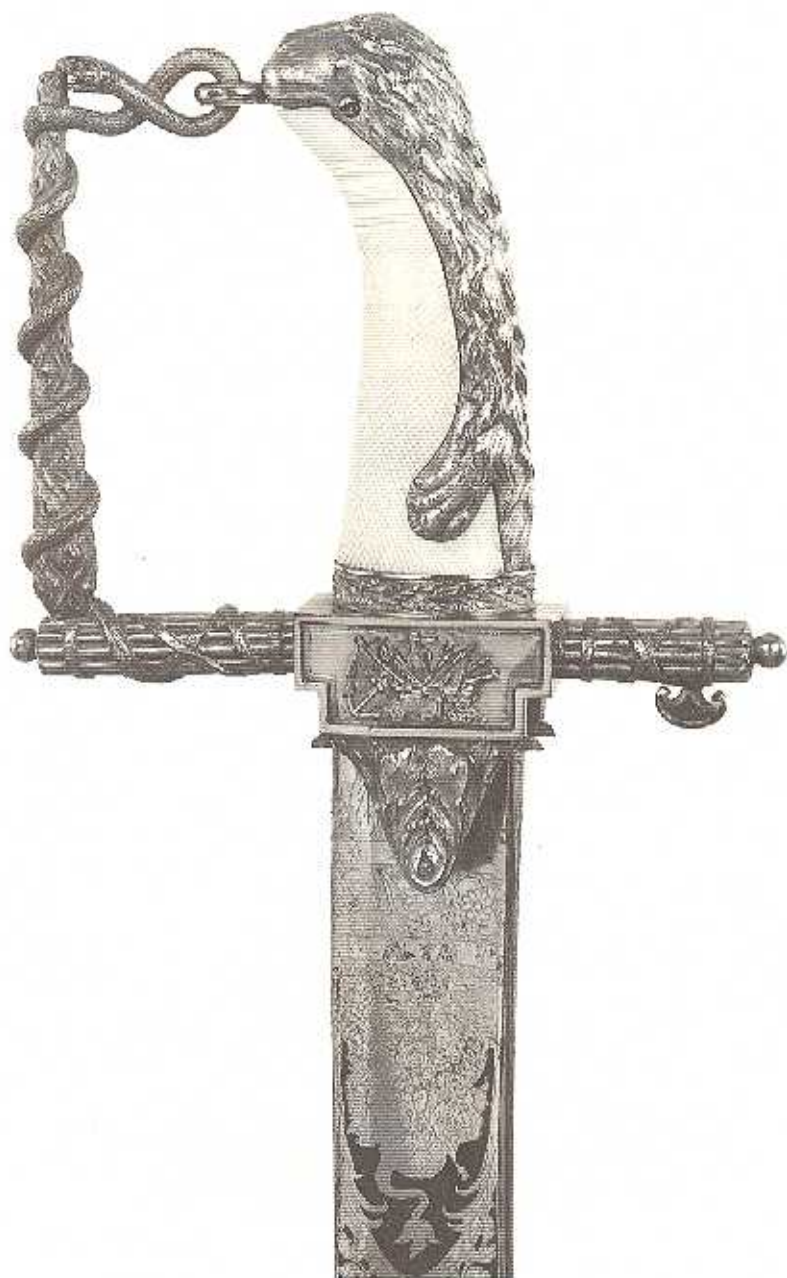


Fig. 4.—*The hilt of Matland's sword.*
Reproduced by courtesy of the National Museums of Scotland.

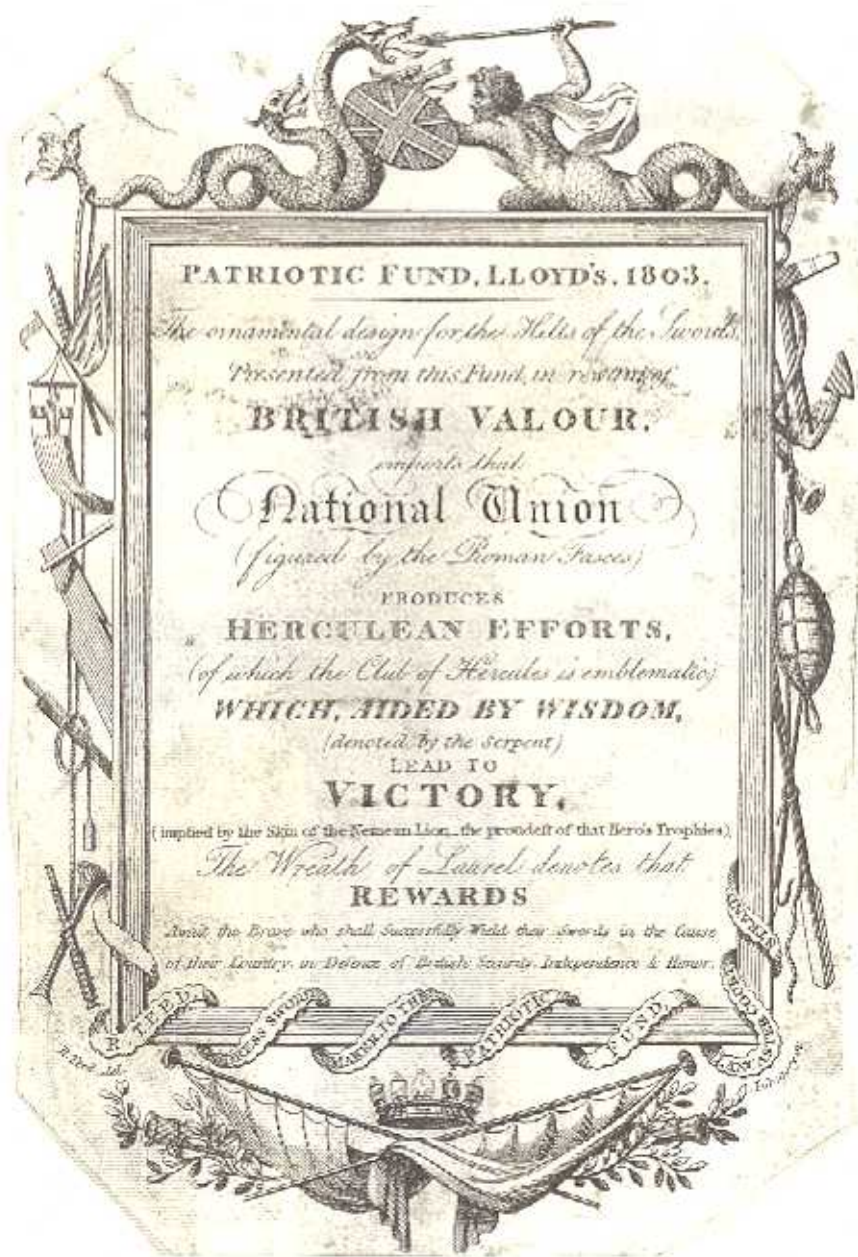


Fig. 5. Engraved label from the lid of a Lloyd's Patriotic Fund sword box.
Reproduced by courtesy of Mr C. Allen.



Fig. 6.—Inscription on the blade of Maitland's sword. Reproduced by courtesy of the National Museums of Scotland.



Fig. 7.—Blade and inscription of Maitland's sword. Reproduced by courtesy of the National Museums of Scotland.



Fig. 8 — *Maitland's sword and its scabbard. Reproduced by courtesy of the National Museums of Scotland.*

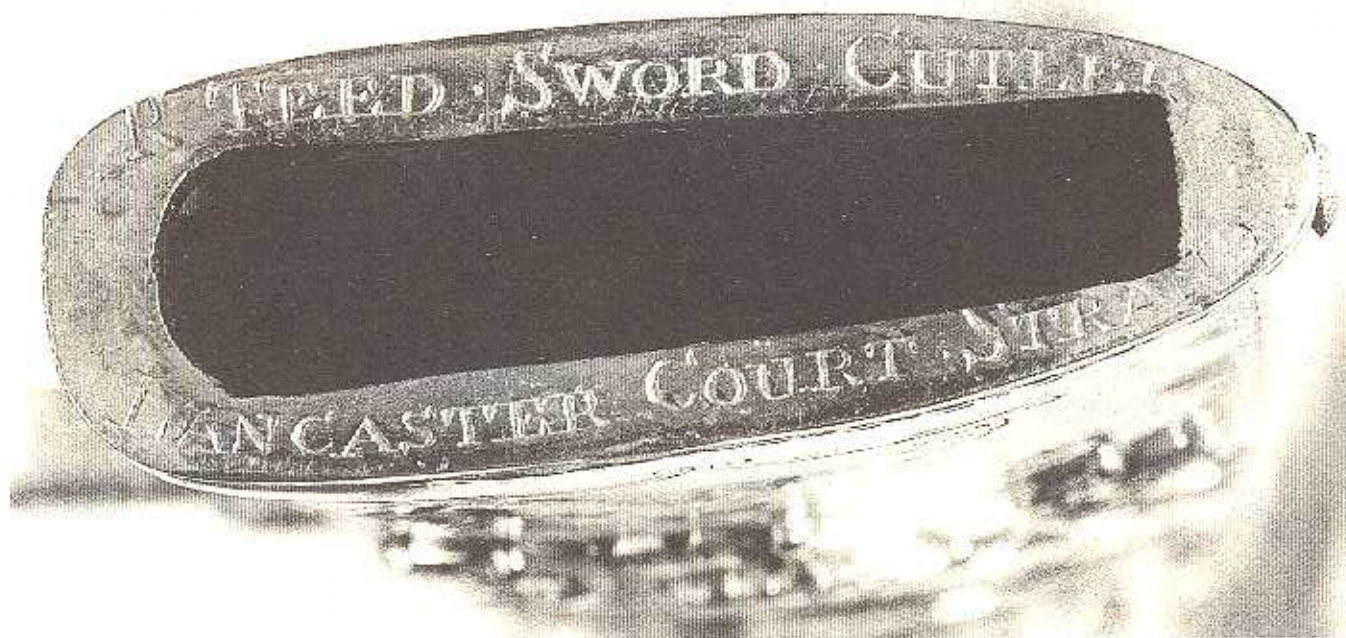


Fig. 9.—The maker's name and address engraved on the scabbard throat of Maitland's sword.
Reproduced by courtesy of the National Museums of Scotland.



Fig. 10.—Sword of 200 guineas' value presented to Lieutenant-General Thomas Graham by the City of London, 1811.
Reproduced by courtesy of the National Museums of Scotland.



Fig. 11.—*Thomas Graham of Balgowan, by Pompeo Batoni, c. 1772*
Private Collection.



Fig. 12.—*The Hon. Mrs Thomas Graham of Balgowan*, by Thomas Gainsborough, 1775.
Reproduced by courtesy of the National Galleries of Scotland.



Fig. 13.—*Colonel Thomas Graham of the 90th Regiment of Foot c.1796.
Reproduced by courtesy of the National Museums of Scotland.*

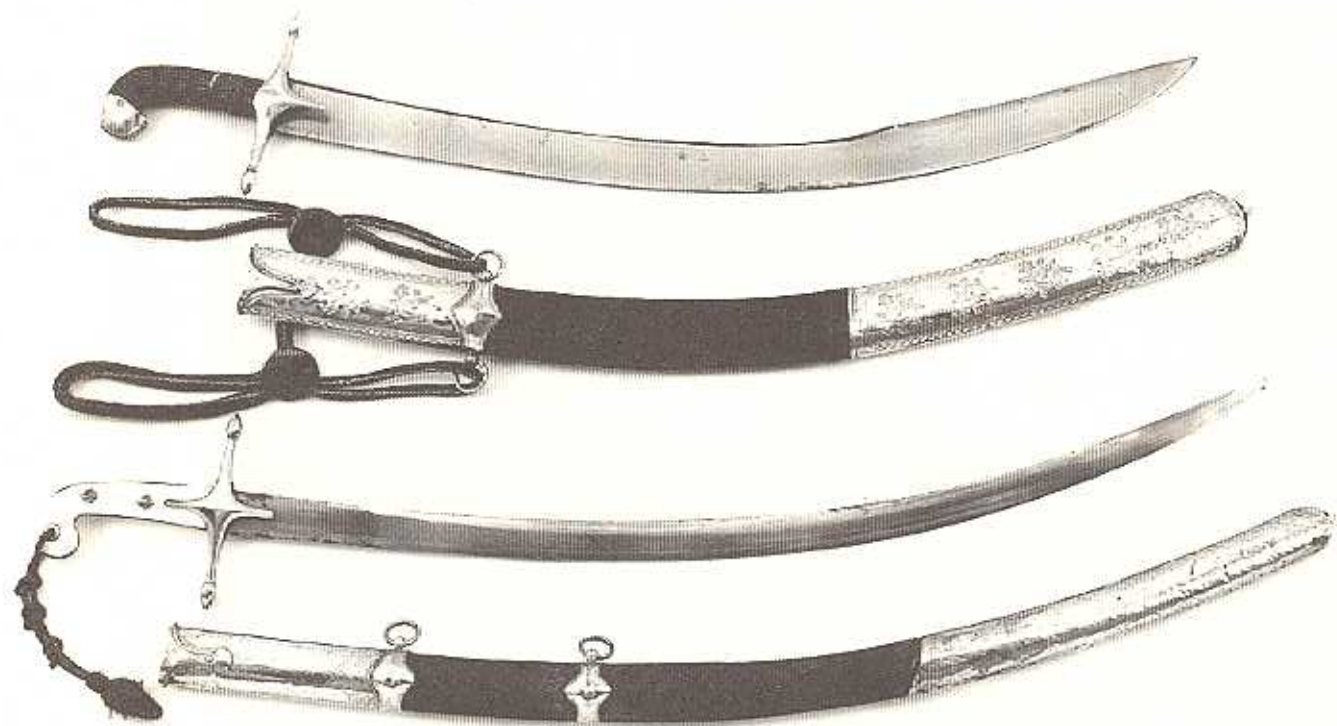


Fig. 14— *Kilic (top) and samsir (bottom) acquired by Graham in Egypt in 1801. Reproduced by courtesy of the National Museums of Scotland.*



Fig. 15.—*Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Graham, Lord Lynedoch,*
by Sir Thomas Lawrence, 1817.
Reproduced by courtesy of the Institute of Directors.



Fig. 16.—*Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Graham, Lord Lynedoch,*
by Sir Thomas Lawrence, 1817.
Reproduced by courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

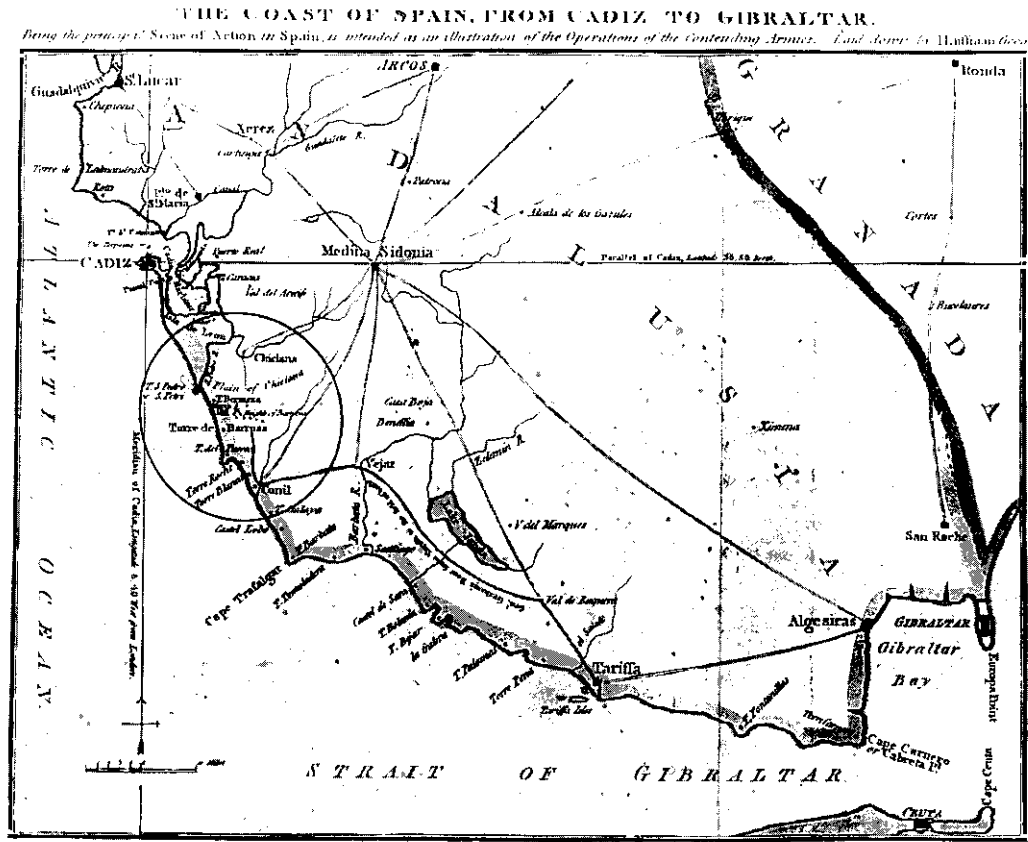


Fig. 17.—The site of the battle of Barrosa 1811, from *The Military Chronicle* May 1811.
 Reproduced by courtesy of the National Museums of Scotland.



Fig. 18.—*A View of the Battle of Barroza...* by G. Thompson, London, April 1811.
Reproduced by courtesy of the National Army Museum.



*Fig. 19.—Sword of 200 guineas' value presented to Lieutenant-General Thomas Graham by the City of London, 1811.
Reproduced by courtesy of the National Museums of Scotland.*



Fig. 20.—The hilt of Graham's sword.
Reproduced by courtesy of the National Museums of Scotland.



Fig. 21.—*Hilt of a sword with a loose chain knuckle bow, presented to Major General Alexander Drom by the officers of the Leicestershire Militia 1811. Reproduced by courtesy of the National Museums of Scotland.*

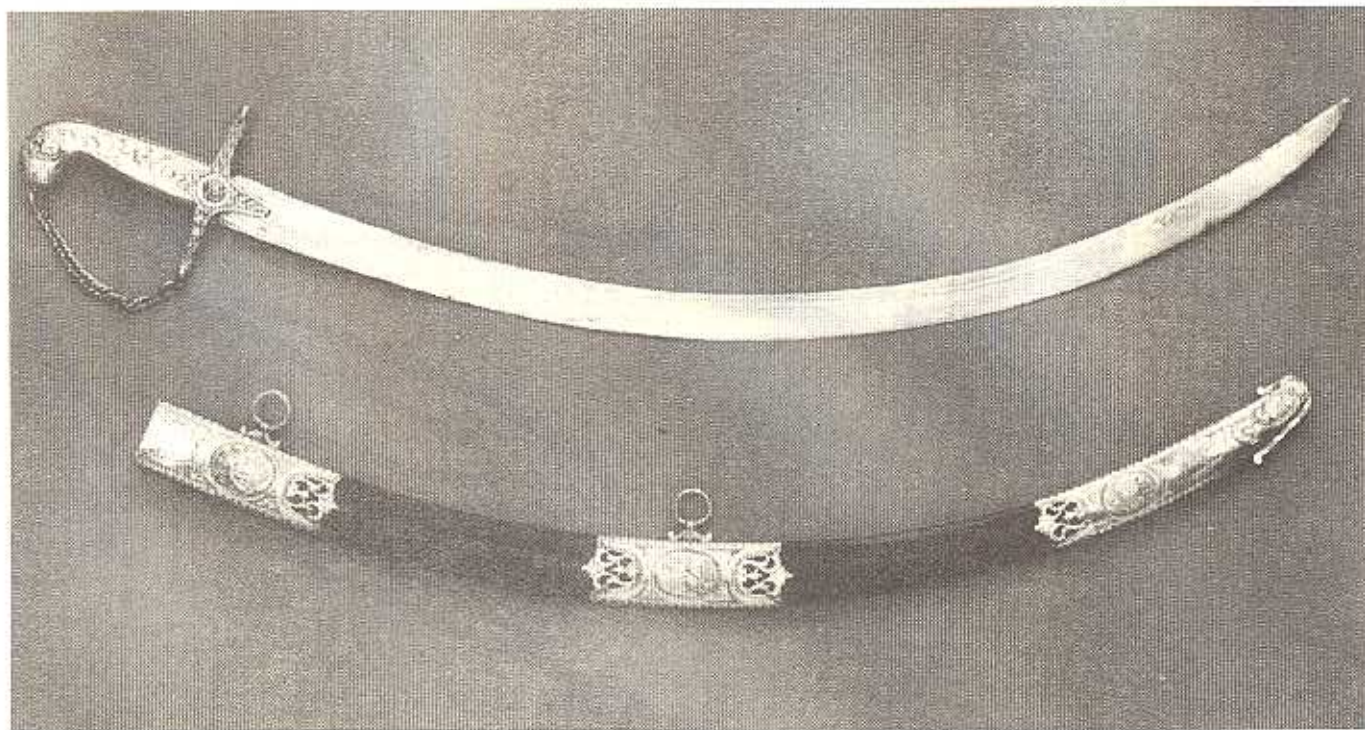


Fig. 22. *Sword of 200 guineas value presented to Lieutenant-General Viscount Wellington KB by the City of London, 1811. Reproduced by courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum.*



Fig. 23.—Blade of Graham's sword showing the figure of Victory. Reproduced by courtesy of the National Museums of Scotland.



Fig. 24. Inscription on the blade of Graham's sword. Reproduced by courtesy of the National Museums of Scotland.



Fig. 25.—The Arms of the City of London on the top scabbard mount of Graham's sword. Reproduced by courtesy of the National Museums of Scotland.



*Fig. 26.—The Arms of Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Graham KB
on the top scabbard mount of his sword.
Reproduced by courtesy of the National Museums of Scotland.*



Fig. 27. *Britannia and the British lion on the middle scabbard mount of Graham's sword.*
Reproduced by courtesy of the National Museums of Scotland.



Fig. 28.—*The British lion trampling the Eagle of the French 8th Infantry regiment on the middle scabbard mount of Graham's sword. Reproduced by courtesy of the National Museums of Scotland.*



Fig. 29.— *The chape of the scabbard of Graham's sword.*
Reproduced by courtesy of the National Museums of Scotland.



Fig. 30.—Lid of the gold box enclosing the Freedom of the City of London presented to Graham in 1813. The victories of Barrosa and Vittoria feature in the top corners. Reproduced by courtesy of the National Museums of Scotland.



Fig. 31.—Base of the gold box enclosing the Freedom of the City of London presented to Graham in 1813.
Reproduced by courtesy of the National Museums of Scotland.