

ARMAMENTS OF THE TROOPS OF THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD 1788-1931
 (28)
 OFFICERS SWORDS AND SABERS
 OF THE PROVINCIAL ROYAL GUARD'S INFANTRY DIVISION

(Translation by Hector J. Meruelo)



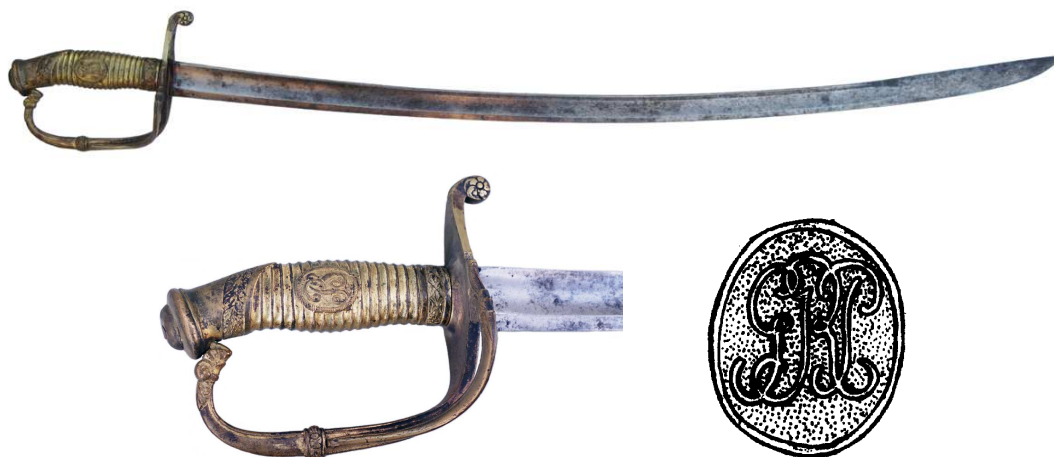
“Commercial” dress swords used by Officers of the Infantry Division of the “Guardia Real Provincial” (Provincial Royal Guard); Polished brass hilts; The first one marked “L/MARTIN” with a fleur de lis on its grip and the anagram “PS” (ProvincialeS) on the langet, surrounded by palm and oak branches; The second one with fleur de lis under royal crown on the grip and the anagram “PS” surrounded by palm and oak branches on the langet: the third one, fleur de lis with royal crown on the grip and the anagram “PS” surrounded by palm leaves on the langet; Straight blades of different types, anywhere between 819 to 842 mm in length and 21 to 25 mm in width.



“Commercial” dress sword used by Officers of the Infantry Division of the Provincial Royal Guard; Brass hilt with anagram “PS” on its grip, guard with three quillons over the langet; Antique, 800x21 mm, straight blade, single edged, flat spine on its first two thirds and with a false double edge on the third one; The spine is inscribed “*Real Fabrica de Toledo, Año 1817, Rs. Gs. Valonas*”; E. Gorostiza collection.

The “Milicias Provinciales” (Provincial Militias) were an Army Reserve; Its Chiefs and Officers were named by the King from amongst the wealthy landowners who felt compensated by the prestige and the wearing of the uniform, even though they received no payment at all for their services; During the War of Independence (1808-14) they were mobilized and organized in the same fashion as the Army Regiments of the Line, but at its end they again became a Reserve body under the command of career Officers, and at half pay until 1818; On this date they reverted to their prior organization which allowed the use, according to José Almirante, “on paper...almost for free, of its 43 regiments and 32,000 men”; The troops were drafted by lottery and the unpaid service limited to two hours of drill in their respective towns or villages, on the first Sunday of each month.

Fernando VII, once his absolute monarchy was recovered, saw in these “Provinciales”, nicknamed “Alonsos”, a quarry from where to draw a force committed to the defense of his type of government and organized the Provincial Royal Guard which we mentioned in Chapters 26 and 27, but as a permanent standing force with salaried Officers.



“Commercial” Officer’s saber derived from the French infantry model of 1821, used by the Officers of the Provincial Royal Guard’s Infantry Division in the period 1825-33; Polished brass hilt with anagram “PS” on the grip, marked “L/BORETI”; Curved, 750x21 mm, fullered and single edged, with a flat spine up to the false double edge at the curved tip; No maker’s marks; Another specimen of the same type bears the anagram “GRP”(Guardia Real Provincial) on its grip.

These dress swords and sabers with Provincial attributes such as the fleur de lis and the “PS” anagram, belong to the period 1825-33; They were a commercial product offered by the military supplies dealers and, in my opinion, were acquired entirely by the Chiefs and Officers of the Provincial Royal Guard; This is confirmed in those specimens bearing the royal crown above the fleur de lis or the “PS” anagram, or where the anagram “GRP” is used (Guardia Real Provincial).

**Juan L. Calvo
February, 2012**

Bibliography:

José Almirante, "Diccionario Militar", Madrid 1989 (second publishing)
Catalogacionarmas.com (December 2005), 8 - Espadas y Sables de las Milicias Provinciales

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