

# *The MARINER'S MIRROR*

WHEREIN MAY BE DISCOVERED HIS  
ART, CRAFT & MYSTERY

*after the manner of their  
use in all ages and  
among all  
Nations  
&*

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A PLACE OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE:  
LORD COCHRANE AND THE SIEGE OF ROSES 1808

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## A PLACE OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE: LORD COCHRANE AND THE SIEGE OF ROSES 1808

*By Justin Reay FSA*

Two hundred years ago, in April 1809, Captain Thomas, Lord Cochrane led a successful attack on a French fleet at anchor in the Aix Roads, but the aftermath was to make this a Pyrrhic victory for Cochrane, who never again led a Royal Navy ship into action.<sup>1</sup> Conversely, five months before Aix Roads, Cochrane was engaged in an important but ultimately unsuccessful operation at Roses on the coast of Catalonia which endorsed his reputation as a courageous and resourceful sea-officer.<sup>2</sup> This article, from original research and analysis of primary source material, sheds new light on the events surrounding the Siege of Roses in November and December 1808, particularly the strategic context of the part played by Lord Cochrane.

The Catalonia maritime theatre is considered by some historians to have been something of a backwater for the Royal Navy during the Peninsular War, but this is far from the case. As Eric Grove pointed out recently, Napoleon Bonaparte's overall strategic vision demanded unfettered access to the Mediterranean, his highway to realize his ambitions in the Levant and onwards into India.<sup>3</sup> The French controlled most of the northerly ports and hinterland of the western basin of the Mediterranean but the sea-lanes were effectively closed to them by the Royal Navy's constant patrols, and the coast itself was vulnerable to sea-borne assault. Catalonia – the north-east coast of the Iberian Peninsula – was the right flank of Bonaparte's southern Continental theatre.

With the *de facto* end of fleet battles after Trafalgar in 1805, the Royal Navy's role in European waters for the next decade became one of combined operations with land forces, logistical support, interdiction of enemy ship movements and containment of large-scale enemy operations ashore in littoral theatres.<sup>4</sup> After the opening of the Spanish theatre of the Peninsular War from May 1808, in addition to blockading Barcelona, off-shore artillery support of troops ashore, occasional sea-chases, and single-ship actions, ships of the Royal Navy's Mediterranean fleet gave important support to the campaign in eastern Spain, dropping food, money and weapons supplied by the British government to regular and irregular forces along the coast, and transporting companies of soldiers to arenas of conflict. The Navy's success in limiting French logistical supply by sea and in occasional spectacular amphibious operations against French military targets onshore had a profound effect upon the morale of Catalan civilians, who were suffering harsh treatment at the hands of the French in reprisal for the attacks of the *guerrilleros*, the Spanish irregulars, and their Catalan counterparts the *somatents*.

These actions also had a marked impact upon French military strategies across



**Figure 1** Detail showing Toulon, Roses and Barcelona from 'Basin of the Mediterranean' by A.K. Johnston, from Keith Johnston's *General Atlas* published by William Blackwood 1863 (courtesy Warwick Leadlay Gallery).

Spain in the early stages of the Peninsular War, which the Spanish know as the War of Independence, and which the Catalans call the French War.

From the spring of 1808 the coast of Catalonia, and in particular the port of Roses, offered a friendly shore for the supply of British ships engaged on a loose blockade of the French naval base of Toulon; but more than that, Roses was a key strategic location in the western Mediterranean. Indeed, the Royal Navy's actions at Roses were among the most important operations in the entire Iberian theatre in the early years of the war, and Lord Cochrane was to play a major role there.<sup>5</sup>

### ROSES: AN HISTORIC SEA-PORT

The town of Roses on the north-east coast of Spain stands on a tightly curved bay at the northern end of the long Gulf of Roses, where the fingers of the Pyrenees drop into the sea forming deep coves and sandy inlets protected by jagged rocks (**Fig. 1**). Close to the provincial cities of Girona and Figueres, Roses lies some 100 miles north of Barcelona by the old coast road and 22 miles south of the border with France.

Roses was founded by Greek merchants from Rhodes as an entrepôt in 776 BC, and its protected deep-water anchorage on major sea-lanes, the rich agricultural hinterland and its relatively good roads to the interior of north-eastern Spain, made it a valuable possession which would be fought over for centuries, from the Punic Wars until the Spanish Civil War.<sup>6</sup> During the Punic Wars (264–146 BC) Roses was a naval

port for the Romans and their beach-head against the Carthaginian client states of eastern Spain.<sup>7</sup> Trade and ship-building at Roses expanded in the Visigothic era and during Moorish rule of the peninsula, and after the Christian re-conquest of Iberia by 1492 the port became the main outlet for the excellent wine, honey, lemons, anchovies, ceramics and olive oil of northern Catalonia.<sup>8</sup> The Ciutadela (Citadel) on the shore-line at Roses was built between 1543 and 1552, as part of Catalonia's defences against Turkish and Algerine pirate attacks. Several naval actions took place at Roses during the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and the wrecks of dozens of warships and merchant vessels lie on the floor of the bay.<sup>9</sup>

In the middle of the seventeenth century the principality of Iberian Catalonia was in a state of insurrection against rule from the Spanish kings of Castile y Leon, the 'Catalan Revolt' of 1640–59, and the French annexed the northern province of Girona, incorporating it into French Catalonia in southern France; Roses was the focus of the sea-borne invasion, and a special medal was struck by the French to commemorate its capture in 1645.<sup>10</sup> In the first months of the Sicilian War, 1674–8, the Bay of Roses was used as a rendezvous by the French under the Comte de Vivonne, conveniently close to his naval base at Toulon but also on the sea-lanes south to Gibraltar and south-east to Sicily whence the expected assault by the Spanish and Dutch combined fleets might come; Cornelis Tromp lay his Dutch fleet and 17 Spanish galleys in Roses Bay in October 1674 to await the French fleet coming out of Toulon.<sup>11</sup> During the Nine Years' War (1688–97), Roses was captured by the Duc de Noailles for Louis XIV in July 1693, and over the ensuing five years the town's fortifications were extensively reinforced by French engineers under the direction of the military architect Sébastien le Prestre de Vauban, who enlarged and strengthened the Citadel's ravelins and glacis outside a complex moat flooded by the *marisma*, the littoral salt marshes. Its five inner bastions and immense curtain wall enclosed the original harbour and the entire town, the 'Plaça de Roses'. The Bay of Roses was now defended by heavy cannon in the Citadel's two seaward-facing bastions and along the curtain wall by the Porta de Mar, the main entrance on the shore.

The port was also covered by large-calibre traversing guns firing through embrasures in Castell de la Trinitat (Trinity Castle), which features prominently in this paper. It was built in 1544 south of the town on the tight curve of the Bay, on the headland of Cap Sant Adreu known locally as la Poncella ('the Button').<sup>12</sup> During Vauban's rebuild in the 1690s, Trinity Castle's ramparts were extended into star-shaped promontories defended by three bastions increasing in height to landward; the seaward approach was covered by heavy cannon firing through angled embrasures and by wheeled field cannon on the ramparts, and the entrance to the haven by a battery of eight 24-pounder guns on flat rocks at sea-level directly beneath, creating at Roses a well-defended anchorage.<sup>13</sup>

In the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–14), Roses was heavily defended on land and at sea by the French and Spanish intent on upholding the Bourbon succession of Philip V, and was the only town in Catalonia not to be captured by the land forces of the Austrian Hapsburg Emperor Charles III or by the amphibious attacks of his Anglo-Dutch allies. Admiral Sir Cloudesley Shovell, commander of the allied fleet, wrote to the Prince of Denmark, Lord High Admiral of England, on 12 October 1705 after the capture of Barcelona: 'This Country is entirely in the hands of Charles the Third except Roses.'<sup>14</sup>

In the long period of peace and economic growth in this region in the middle of the eighteenth century, artisanal building was encouraged on the shoreline by the new harbour built outside the walls in the 1690s, leading to the creation of a new town, the 'Ville de Roses' behind the artisans' *barrio*. In the modern era the Citadel was usually heavily garrisoned with infantry, cavalry and artillery, and their barracks and stables were substantial, creating a separate military township inside the walls. In peace-time the local regiment of foot, the *Compania Fixa de Roses*, was reduced to garrison battalion status at the Citadel, but was fully manned at times of war, and often deployed elsewhere in Catalonia.<sup>15</sup>

In the French Revolutionary Wars (1792–1802), Roses was the beach-head for an expeditionary force of Portuguese and Spanish troops invading French Catalonia in 1793, then captured by the French in 1794 after a fierce siege in which the entire civilian population and military garrison were evacuated by a squadron of Spanish ships commanded by Admiral Federico Gravina; the French also captured Trinity Castle and, although the Citadel was extensively damaged, they resisted Gravina's ensuing naval blockade until the Peace of Basel in July 1795 saw the collapse of the First Coalition and ended hostilities between France and Spain.<sup>16</sup> Significant damage to the medieval town inside the walls during the 'Great Siege' of 1794–5 caused most of the civilian population to be rehoused in the Ville de Roses.

As the architectural historian Pablo de la Fuente puts it:

Without doubt, the fortifications [at] Roses are a point of reference of the military history of the modern era . . . Trinity Castle is an interesting work of orthodox design . . . [the Citadel] is one of the highpoints of Renaissance civil engineering, town planning and architecture'.<sup>17</sup>

However, designed initially to defend the area against attack by Barbarossa's galleys in the sixteenth century, and rebuilt to counter large-scale sea-borne assault in the latter part of the seventeenth century, the offensive strengths of the fortifications at Roses are mainly directed seawards, with their landward-facing walls and bastions built to support many fewer and much less powerful cannon, Trinity Castle depending for protection upon the height of its walls and its double barbican, and the Citadel depending upon the scale of the glacis and the difficulty of crossing the marshy moat; this landward weakness would be exploited by investing French forces with modern artillery in the first decade of the nineteenth century.

### THE FRENCH INVASION OF CATALONIA 1808

Barcelona, the capital of Catalonia, had been effectively under French control since the end of 1807, and after the whole of Spain rose against Napoleon's occupying troops in May 1808 the city became a fortified garrison harshly governed by General Duhesme. But its landward side was invested by Spanish and Catalan regular soldiers, and it was loosely blockaded from the sea by patrolling Royal Navy frigates, notably the squadron commanded by Captain George Mundy of the *Hydra* (38), Vice Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood's senior officer liaising with the Catalan insurgents ashore between 1807 and 1809.

Many British provincial newspapers printed a description of the French invasion through the passes of the Pyrenees, which had begun in February 1808. There were only four places where the border roads crossed the mountain range, two of which were mere mule tracks impassable outside the summer months. Of the two main



passes, one led from Bayonne to Madrid through the fertile lands of the Pays Vasco on the west coast, but even though controlled by large forces under the direct command of Napoleon himself, it was inhospitable to the invaders. The eastern pass into Catalonia was an even greater trial. This British newspaper report states the situation accurately:

The second grand entrance into Spain is from Perpignan to Barcelona, through Bellegarde, La Jonquera, and the famous pass of Figueras in Catalonia. About 50 miles of this road lies through the Gorges of the Pyrenees, where, in many places, 100 armed peasants may arrest an army. Neither horses, provisions, nor accommodations are to be found'.<sup>18</sup>

The Spanish were divided between the small numbers of the enlightened professional and middle class *afrancesados*, and the conservative bulk of the populace – aristocrats, clerics, landowners, urban labourers and feudal peasants – who strongly resented Napoleon's intervention in their country. When French soldiers were murdered in isolated villages and open country in the central plateau late in 1807, French forces were strengthened and their regime became harsher. A full-scale revolt was likely, but with the Spanish navy all but destroyed in 1805, dissent among their military commanders, and a strong invasion force controlling movements and soaking up the already scant resources of food in the interior (crops failed in several successive seasons from 1806), the Spanish seemed powerless to make a concerted resistance. On 2 May 1808 (*Dos de Mayo*) many of the citizens of Madrid rose in a violent attack on a squadron of Murat's Mameluke cavalry in the great square of El Sol; the following morning, out-of-hand executions by French troops of young men and radical priests in fields to the north of the city stoked the fires of popular insurrection. The bloody revolt of Dos de Mayo and its murderous aftermath were pivotal, but still the Supreme Junta, now in Cádiz, havered for nearly a month before declaring war on France. However, locally Spanish forces and popular militia spontaneously rose against the invader.<sup>19</sup>

Lord Collingwood, commander-in-chief of the Mediterranean fleet since October 1805 and described by Thomas Creevey as Britain's 'prime and sole minister' in the Mediterranean, 'ordering and executing everything upon his own responsibility', undertook negotiations with the Junta, who were keen to create an alliance with Spain's traditional enemy, their only hope against France's superior forces on the ground.<sup>20</sup> As Edward Brenton put it:

... while the French army rioted in the interior, and imperiously demanded that treasure for its support which Spain had not to give, their unhappy people turned their eyes upon the English for deliverance, and were not disappointed.<sup>21</sup>

Of the 167,000 troops of the newly formed Armée d'Espagne which Napoleon committed to the peninsula after the outbreak of Spanish insurgence, 25,000 were of the VIIth Corps, 18,000 of whom streamed through the eastern pass of the Pyrenees in June and July 1808 reaching Girona, the capital of Catalonia's northern province.<sup>22</sup> Because the Royal Navy effectively controlled the sea-lanes, most of the re-supply of munitions had to come through the mountains but this was possible for their long, heavy baggage trains only in the dryer months of summer and autumn, and even then they were under constant threat of attack by bands of *somatents*, requiring protection along the whole route, so the invasion on this front went very slowly.

Seaborne supply would be much faster and much more efficient. A small brig could carry a hundred tons or more of provisions, as much as would need 500 pack mules, or 20 large wagons each with half a dozen oxen or horses who would need feeding or replacing every few miles along the rugged mountain roads, and the protection of soldiers and cavalry along the whole length of the supply train.<sup>23</sup> It was vital for the effective realization of France's ambitions in the east and south-east of the peninsula that they should be able to circumvent the great natural barrier of the Pyrenees by sea. This would be possible, even given the British blockade of Toulon, if the sea passage from Marseilles and the ports of the Rhône delta was short.

Along the coast south of the border the French held Llança, La Selva and Cadaquès, ports large enough to take supply convoys, but the routes inland from these towns were as difficult at this period as the mountain pass itself, and the ports were poorly protected against assault from the sea. Barcelona, the only large port in French hands with access to the interior, was too far south, under siege, its inland supply routes through difficult hill country constantly threatened by guerrillas, and the easier coast road from the north bombarded by British warships and threatened by amphibious operations. Although seaward access was blockaded by Royal Navy frigates, small maritime convoys or single supply ships armed *en flûte* could occasionally break through in poor visibility. Rear Admiral Zacharie Allemand's Atlantic squadron's rendezvous with a large element of Vice Admiral Ganteaume's Toulon fleet in 1808, their reprovisioning of French troops in Corfu, and their combined fleet's return to Toulon avoiding Collingwood's squadrons, showed just how difficult it was to enforce a close blockade of this coast.<sup>24</sup>

Roses was the perfect place for French strategic needs. Less than half a day's sail from Barcelona and within a day's fast sail of the main French Mediterranean naval port of Toulon, the haven now became a key target of Napoleon's forces and its capture became essential to his strategy for eastern Spain. At the head of a large gulf, with its own deep-water anchorage in the lee of the mountains and protected by strong fortresses, Roses had a few good roads across its marshy littoral to the whole interior of Catalonia and thence to central Spain. But the very factors which made Roses eminently suitable for French military logistics also made it a threat if it were in enemy hands. In his memoirs, written in the third person thirteen years later, the commander of the VIIth Corps in Catalonia, General Laurent, le Marquis de Gouvion Saint-Cyr, was clear about the importance of Roses to French military strategy in Spain:

The General-in-chief [Saint-Cyr himself] decided to begin straight away the siege of Roses, the place which was of the greatest importance for operations in Catalonia, because of its magnificent bay which protects it and which shelters enemy vessels in every season. An English squadron was established there, and while it stayed there it was impossible to re-provision Barcelona by sea; as a consequence that place must fall from the hands of the Spaniards by the end of December, as Duhesme wrote to the major-general [of the Armée d'Espagne, Prince Berthier].<sup>25</sup>

One of the earliest French military historians was to write, just a few years later:

The [French] occupation of Roses would become as useful for the French army as it was annoying to the English, by depriving them of an easy and convenient entrepôt to supply the insurgents with provisions and weapons . . .<sup>26</sup>

The nearby city of Figueres straddled the main land route from the border, with mountains at its back and the plain of Empordà stretching to the coast, and it was, as Lord Cochrane was to state, 'the key to Catalonia' which would only be safe if there was no danger of an assault from Roses 11 miles away.<sup>27</sup> The road south passed by the walls of the Castell de Sant Ferran, at that time the largest fortification in Europe, an imposing mass of bastions, glacis and moats.<sup>28</sup> On 18 March 1808, when Spain was still in an uneasy alliance with Napoleon, a company of 300 French soldiers entered the castle by a ruse, taking over the gates and letting in a regiment of infantry, stationing a garrison of 1,200 men there. Although after Dos de Mayo the castle of Sant Ferran was strenuously invested by *miquelets* – the Catalan militia who had a good reputation as light infantry and marksmen – who regained control of the city for a few weeks, they could not shake the enemy loose from the great fortress, which was reinforced in July 1808 by an advance contingent of fresh troops from the VIIth Corps' headquarters in Perpignan, under the brilliant French general Honoré Charles Reille, aide-de-camp to the Emperor Napoleon.<sup>29</sup>

Now the French were in command of the road to the south, Figueres became the fulcrum of their military activity in the north-east of the Iberian peninsula, but Roses was still in Spanish hands and the threat of a sea-borne assault by allied British and Spanish forces landing there and marching the few easy kilometres to Figueres effectively strangled French progress. It had to be taken. The strategic importance of Roses to French military ambitions was such that Napoleon himself was well aware of it; he mentions the port in several of his letters from 1808 to 1810, and in a dispatch written at Bayonne in July 1808 to General Reille he emphatically states: 'The moment you become master of Figueres, you must become master of Roses.' Six days later, when Reille was already on his way south through the mountain pass, Napoleon wrote to him again: 'The most important operation, after the relief of Figueres, is the disarming of Roses.'<sup>30</sup>

Reille attacked Roses as soon as he had reinforced Figueres; although the attack was repulsed, it was clear that the town was poorly provisioned and the defences themselves in bad shape, not having been repaired since the Great Siege of 1794–5.<sup>31</sup> The Spanish realized the necessity of protecting Roses, and in August 1808 General the Marques del Palacio sent to the Citadel companies from three good infantry and rifle regiments, the Spanish Bourbons, the Ultonians and the Swiss de Wimpfen Regiment, who with the garrison battalion of the Compania Fixa de Roses, the local company of *miquelets* and a band of *somatents* from Figueres, brought the fighting strength in the military township to 3,200. However, as the French advance in northern Catalonia gained momentum, the Spanish Junta at Cádiz made one of their many errors of judgement in military leadership, removing the Marques del Palacio from the senior post in Catalonia and substituting a lesser man, as Lord Collingwood intimated in a letter to the Earl of Mulgrave, First Lord of the Admiralty:

I believe I have mentioned General Vives to your Lordship, as an officer in whom the Spaniards themselves had not much confidence . . . yet, they appointed him Captain-General in Catalonia, one of the most important posts in Spain.<sup>32</sup>

Juan Miguel de Vives, the new Captain-General of Catalonia based at Girona (then itself only under desultory attack from the stretched French forces), failed to understand the importance of Roses, and did not further reinforce the garrison, nor



did he ensure that the Citadel was defensible and well provisioned. Collingwood was in no doubt as to the importance of Roses to both Anglo-Spanish and French plans. In a letter to Vives of late November 1808, he suggests that reinforcements be sent to support the defence against the siege by the French which forms the backdrop to this paper, and goes further in a portentous prediction:

I beg also to point out to your Excellency the absolute necessity of having two Spanish Ships sent to Rosas. The circumstances of the British Fleet may require that I recall the Ships which I have hitherto kept there and which I considered so necessary to the security of the Place, for it is my opinion it should not be left without a certain force in the Bay, and even that Force which will aid much the resistance made by the Garrison, yet will not in the end secure it from being reduced by a vigorous siege. The consequences of such an unfortunate event will be to give the Enemy a Port in Spain from which they will carry on the most destructive operations.<sup>33</sup>

In fact, after persuasion from the commanders of the *somatents* and *miquelets* and a plea from the governor of Roses, by the date of Collingwood's letter Vives had made a half-hearted move towards supporting Roses, sending a relief force of infantry under the competent Catalan general Mariano Álvarez de Castro, but it was too small, too weak and too late to have any effect, and was stopped on the marshy banks of the river Fluvià 6 miles south of Roses by a regiment of French grenadiers under General Souhan.<sup>34</sup>

Throughout his command of the Mediterranean fleet from October 1805 until his resignation in April 1810, Collingwood appreciated the strategic and logistic importance of Roses, as Nelson had before him, and as his successors Martin, Cotton and Pellew would afterwards.<sup>35</sup> Collingwood's reading of the situation at Roses was informed by personal knowledge. In common with all other British warships in this part of the Mediterranean, his flagship would frequently 'wood and water' at the mouth of the Fluvià, and visited Roses itself, which was a major source of fresh provisions and strategic intelligence for the Mediterranean fleet during its successive command by Lord Hood, Lord Keith, Lord Nelson and Lord Collingwood.<sup>36</sup> 'Rendezvous 97' off Cap Sant Sebastien a few miles from the southern end of the Gulf of Roses was one of the Royal Navy's main squadron stations in the western Mediterranean for some years, and was a winter anchorage for Collingwood's line-of-battle fleet each year from 1806, even while Spain was still at war with Great Britain.<sup>37</sup>

Although he was always short of warships and they were feeling the strain of several unbroken years at sea, Collingwood ensured a permanent presence on the Roses station by sending there his western Mediterranean squadrons, comprising one or two third-rate ships-of-the-line and three or four frigates, to patrol and revictual in rotation.<sup>38</sup>

Carlos Diàz Capmany, himself a recent captain-general of Catalonia and now an historian of distinction, sums up the importance of Roses to British naval strategy in these years:

The principal objective of the warships which Collingwood stationed in the Bay of Roses was to maintain his own base from which to intercept French movements along the coast of the Mediterranean, and prevent its control by France.<sup>39</sup>

The Admiralty in London might have preferred the Mediterranean fleet to be outside the French military harbour at Toulon or supporting various land assaults on the Italian front or in the south of Spain, occasionally going to Gibraltar, Port Mahón or Valletta to refit, while its frigates patrolled the sea-lanes between the Strait and Naples, but Collingwood's maintenance of a significant presence close to Roses was well understood by his knowledgeable friends at home. As soon as he heard of Spain's alliance with Great Britain in June 1808, the Duke of Northumberland wrote to Collingwood about the strategic utility of Roses, recalling his own military service in the area:

I wish I could be certain of the Catalans rising, for they are a fine, brave and hardy people and I know they can levy 30,000 Men in a few days. If they can get again possession of the fortress of Figueras (which I know is possible) they would effectually bar the passage of the Eastern Pyrenees and prevent the possibility of any troops entering Spain from the South of France or Italy. I wish instead of going off Cadiz Gen'l Spencer has been sent to your Lordship to land him in the Bay of Rosas for this purpose. It was in this Bay I landed with Portuguese troops in the year '93 when they joined the Spanish army in Rousillon. The Bay is a very fine one, the landing very good and within an easy march of Figueras.<sup>40</sup>

Influential newspapers such as the *Morning Chronicle* were voicing opinions of a similar nature:

It is particularly to be desired that a part of the intended succours [British reinforcements to the Spanish army] should be landed in Catalonia, about the Bay of Rosas, as it is thought the French will enter that province in considerable force from Italy.

Perhaps in an effort to persuade the British government to such action, the leader in the *Morning Chronicle* for Saturday October 22 1808 echoes Northumberland's letter of four months before:

We understand it is the intention of his Majesty's Government to make two landings in Catalonia. One with a large body of troops in the Bay of Rosas, close to the Pyrenees, in order to oppose the entrance of the French forces expected from Italy . . .<sup>41</sup>

The concept of landing troops at Roses and retaking the key town of Figueres was one put to the Admiralty by Thomas, Lord Cochrane in 1809, after he had become familiar with the port; he would allude to this in speeches to Parliament for several years afterwards. It makes complete strategic sense, as it would have inhibited the resupply and reinforcement of French forces in the peninsula through the eastern pass of the Pyrenees and allowed the opening up of a military front in eastern Spain, which would split French forces in the peninsula and distract their attention from Sicily, and which Britain could quite easily reinforce by sea-borne landings, with a short supply chain from allied ports in the Mediterranean.

Minorca, available again to the British from the spring of 1808, was too far from the border with France to be itself an effective base for amphibious assault on the mainland, and its inward and outbound supply routes were often cut by autumnal and winter storms. Collingwood and his successors on this station considered Port Mahón to be too difficult to defend against assault from a determined French naval force. Collingwood wrote to the First Lord of the Admiralty from Minorca in March 1809, ' . . . until I have some intelligence, I must not leave this quarter; for

these islands are defenceless, and would be reduced by a small force'. Admiral Sir Edward Pellew, commander-in-chief from April 1811, wrote to the Colonial Secretary, Henry Wellesley in a similar vein: 'At present it [Port Mahón] is entirely open to surprise, and incapable of an effectual resistance to any enterprise which the French may be disposed to undertake against it.'<sup>42</sup> And the threat of a naval assault by France was real, as the fleet at Toulon was being strengthened by warships coming off the four main slipways in the naval yard – nine new ships-of-the-line and three frigates mounting 40 guns or more entered fleet service at Toulon between 1806 and 1810, with another 74-gun *vaisseau-de-ligne* and a 40-gun *frégate* commissioned to sea at Genoa, and an 80-gun *vaisseau* at Venice in the same period.<sup>43</sup> And, contrary to uninformed opinion, French naval mariners at Toulon were in good condition and able to undertake sea training, notwithstanding the loose blockade.<sup>44</sup> If he did not know it before, Collingwood knew from a letter intercepted in January 1809 to Napoleon from his minister of the marine, Vice Admiral Denis Decrès, that the French were strengthening their potential naval presence in the Mediterranean, posing an enhanced level of danger to Sicily, Malta and Minorca.<sup>45</sup>

A beach-head on the mainland was necessary, and Roses was the best – perhaps the only – place where all essentials to such a strategy came together.

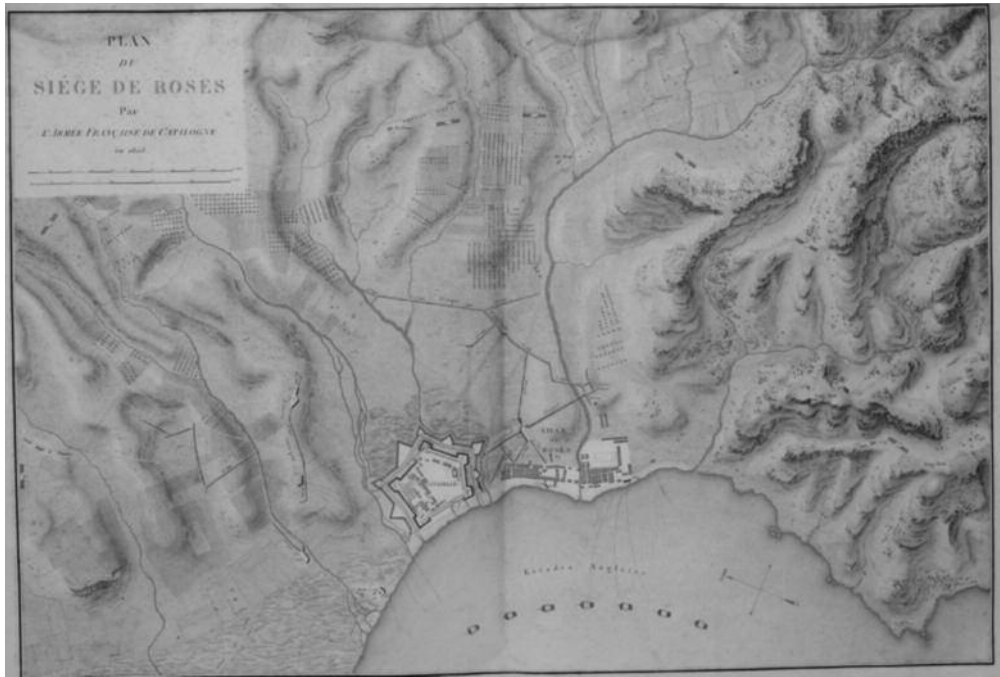
#### THE ROYAL NAVY AND THE SIEGE OF ROSES<sup>46</sup>

After the insurrection of Dos de Mayo the French invaders' gloves came off. The VIIth Corps swept into the Catalanian border county of Alt Empordà, capturing most of the towns and reinforcing its garrison at Figueres. This was the prelude to wider ambitions and the French thrust southwards, but at their back Roses was a chink in their armour.<sup>47</sup>

When the outbreak of hostilities between Spain and France became known in the area, the small French garrison at Roses, previously an allied unit enforcing the port's adherence to Napoleon's 'Continental System', was driven from the town by the local *miquelets*, and Spanish regular soldiers were stationed in the Citadel and the castle.<sup>48</sup> In the spring and summer of 1808 Collingwood would get reports on the state of the insurrection on this coast from his commanders, among whom was William Hoste of the *Amphion* (38), who opened the Royal Navy's Peninsular War account in the Mediterranean theatre with a searing engagement at Roses just days after Dos de Mayo.<sup>49</sup> Another was Commodore Robert Otway of the *Montagu* (74), who spent time ashore in July 1808 discussing the general situation with Catalan military leaders at Girona before being engaged in a brisk defence of Roses.<sup>50</sup>

On 11 July 1,500 French troops under General Reille attempted to take the town. His engineers began to construct siege trenches around the ravelins of the Citadel, and to build a road in the hills to take artillery trains, while infantry probed the defensive lines of the new town. The attack was gallantly withstood by the garrison, at that time numbering only about 1,000 men, assisted after 24 July by over 200 Royal Marines from a squadron of Royal Navy ships commanded by Otway.<sup>51</sup> Over the next three days the Marines supported their new Spanish allies, until a large band of *somatents* attacked the French from the rear, and the two forces closed in a pincer movement driving the invaders away, the French losing a third of their force killed, wounded or taken prisoner. Reille withdrew to await reinforcements.<sup>52</sup>

In the autumn of 1808, Saint-Cyr's rag-tag VIIth Corps was stiffened with



**Figure 2** ‘Plan du Siège de Roses par l’Armée Française de Catalogne en 1808’, from Beauvais de Préau ed., *Victoires*, p. 226. The location of the ‘English squadron’ is stylized and fanciful, but the position of the French batteries and their arcs of fire are accurately shown; Trinity Castle is due south from the eastern end of the Ville de Roses, on the promontory at the bottom right-hand corner of the chart (Museu Ciutadela de Roses).

battalions of the Imperial Guard grenadiers under General Souhan, General Rutý’s regiment of artillery, General Pino’s regiment of Italian cavalry, and companies of elite Italian voltigeurs and Swiss tirailleurs; renamed the Armée de Catalogne, it was taking up key positions inside north-eastern Spain.<sup>53</sup> General Reille, the senior divisional commander now leading a considerably stronger force worthy of his military talent, closed in on Roses to finish the work started in July. By 2 November the French had captured all the villages in the vicinity, had placed artillery batteries around three sides of the Citadel and in the hills overlooking the town, and were well placed to launch their main offensive (Fig. 2).<sup>54</sup>

The Royal Navy’s line-of-battle ship *Excellent* (74), commanded by Captain John West, entered the Bay of Roses on Saturday 5 November accompanied by the *Meteor*, Commander James Collins; they were soon joined by the *Lucifer*, Captain Robert Hall. The *Meteor* and the *Lucifer* were bomb-ships, vessels designed to bombard shore targets at close range with carronades and large mortars mounted on rotating trucks. Both were converted merchant brigs, higher in the water than normal bomb-vessels and with their gunpowder magazines above the waterline, which made their work at Roses more hazardous than usual.<sup>55</sup> The next day West observed a large force approaching the town and recorded that the enemy had taken possession of the heights to westward. In response to a request from the Governor of Roses, West sent 47 seamen and 60 Marines ashore to assist in the defence of the

Citadel, and the ships' guns opened fire on the French lines.<sup>56</sup> Over the following four weeks British sailors and Marines took part in sorties against the French advance posts, and against the French engineers working on the artillery road in the foothills.<sup>57</sup> On 17 November the French began to position a battery of three heavy guns and two light field pieces on Puig Rom, a steep hill immediately above Trinity Castle, but came under fire from the *Lucifer* throwing mortar shells in a high arc from close range. However, once the guns were in place they attacked the bomb-ship with a concerted fire which severely damaged the British vessel, causing her to retire.<sup>58</sup> Saint-Cyr continued to reinforce Reille, and the investing force now numbered over 11,000 men with more promised. The constant fire from French field guns on the hills above the town and from their siege guns on the plains made the defence of Roses ultimately a hopeless cause. On 20 November the French Batterie no. 12 on Puig Rom opened fire on the castle and, with new batteries added later, would keep up an intense bombardment until the end of the siege.<sup>59</sup> On the same day the *Excellent* was joined on the Roses station by Captain Richard Bennett and the *Fame* (74), whose sailors and Marines replaced West's people ashore; running low on stores and ammunition, that evening the *Excellent* made preparations to sail, having lost three men killed in actions ashore and reporting 16 wounded.<sup>60</sup>

Due to the incessant fire from the artillery batteries above and with a small force inadequately equipped to withstand a siege, and no relief from General Álvarez' Spanish reinforcements bogged down in the marshes south of the town, Captain Bennett decided to evacuate his men from Trinity during the evening of 22 November to concentrate them in the defence of the Citadel; a total evacuation of the castle would have given the enemy immediate control of the Bay and a wide arc of the sea off the cape, forcing the British ships out and preventing them from giving further support to the Citadel, but the Catalan and Spanish defenders of the castle held on against French attacks for the next two days.

### LORD COCHRANE ARRIVES AT ROSES

When the *Excellent* was making sail to leave the bay she had recorded another ship in the offing. This was Captain Lord Cochrane's 38-gun frigate the *Imperieuse*, which was towed into the Bay of Roses in the afternoon of 22 November.<sup>61</sup>

Thomas, Lord Cochrane was the son of the ninth Earl of Dundonald, a Scottish peer. Born in 1775 and dying in 1860 Thomas was an exact contemporary of his adversary at Roses, General Reille. Cochrane was over 6 feet tall, broad-shouldered, with a thatch of hair, sandy red in his younger years and a prominent hooked nose (see Fig. 3). He had joined the Royal Navy in June 1793 at the relatively late age of seventeen, but like many other young gentlemen of the period, he had gained recorded service time by his name being entered on the books of Royal Navy ships for years before he actually took his first berth; this was undertaken for him by his uncle, Alexander Forrester Inglis Cochrane, a veteran of the American Revolutionary War, and a rear-admiral in 1808. In May 1796, aged 20, Lord Cochrane passed for lieutenant; he was given his first command in March 1800 and made post-captain eighteen months later.<sup>62</sup>

By 1808 Thomas, Lord Cochrane was already well known in Britain. As the commander of small ships, the brig-sloop *Speedy* (14) and the *Pallas* (32), he had captured many French and Spanish warships, merchantmen and treasure ships in the





**Figure 3** Captain Lord Cochrane in 1807, mezzotint engraving by Charles Turner, 1809, from oil painting by Peter Ströhling (author's collection).

Atlantic and the Mediterranean, making a potential fortune for himself and his men out of the prize money. Like several other sea-officers of the period, Lord Cochrane's exploits were widely reported in the public prints but Cochrane, uniquely, also became the subject of fictional hero-worship in his own lifetime.<sup>63</sup>

Cochrane was posted to the *Imperieuse* in August 1806. The frigate had been built for the Spanish navy at Ferrol, north-west Spain, as the 44-gun *Medea*, and was Rear-Admiral José de Bustamente's flagship when she was captured by the squadron commanded by Rear-Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane, during the ambush of a neutral Spanish treasure fleet in the Atlantic in October 1804 which precipitated a state of war between Spain and Great Britain. Refitted at Plymouth, the *Medea* was taken into the Royal Navy as the *Iphigenia*, and renamed *Imperieuse* in 1805.<sup>64</sup> She was one of the largest frigates in the service at this period; rated as a fifth-rate, 38-gun 18-pounder frigate, she was pierced for 30 long guns on her upper deck and 24 12-pounder long guns or 24-pounder carronades on her fo'c'sle and quarterdecks.<sup>65</sup> After short patrols with the Channel Fleet, in September 1807 the *Imperieuse* left England to escort a convoy to the Mediterranean, where she began an eventful cruise between the Adriatic, Malta and the Balearic Islands, capturing many enemy vessels,

and sailing for a time in the squadron commanded by George Mundy off Minorca and Barcelona.<sup>66</sup>

During the negotiations with the Supreme Junta at Cádiz in July 1808, Cochrane was ordered by Lord Collingwood to support the Spanish insurrection against the French by whatever means he could.<sup>67</sup> In August the *Imperieuse* was at Roses for three days, anchoring a mile or so off the headland on which Trinity Castle stood, to take in live cattle, vegetables and wine and to send watering parties ashore. From 7 September she joined company with Captain Jahleel Brenton's *Spartan* (38), cruising between Barcelona and the Rhône delta, harrying French soldiers on the coast roads and forcing the French to send much-needed troops from the Armée de Catalogne back to France to defend the signal stations and coastal towns; on occasion the two ships revictualled at Roses.<sup>68</sup> On 16 September Cochrane and Brenton captured a French convoy at Cadaquès and the *Imperieuse* came in to the Bay of Roses with two of the prizes.<sup>69</sup> Cochrane went ashore where he met the governor of the Citadel, Colonel don Pedro O'Daly. The governor was so taken with him that he wrote an effusive letter about Cochrane's and Brenton's exploits to the Catalan Junta in Girona which concludes: 'The two Captains above alluded to have occupied the attention of the enemy, and kept them in a state of alarm in the vicinity of Roussillon'.<sup>70</sup>

The *Imperieuse* spent six days in the anchorage at Roses, an unusual period of rest, repairing the captured vessels to be sent to Gibraltar for condemning as prizes by the Admiralty Court, Cochrane no doubt using the time judiciously in familiarizing himself with the lie of the land, and encouraging his 'young gentlemen' to chart the seamarks.<sup>71</sup> By the autumn of 1808 the *Imperieuse* was again on a frigate's usual punishing routine in this theatre, patrolling between Gibraltar and Cape Sicié off Toulon, and taking turns in blockade duties at Barcelona, Alicante and Malaga. While off Barcelona in November Cochrane was apprised of the French advance against Roses, and 'knowing that Lord Collingwood attached considerable importance to this place', he ordered the ship to proceed to Roses Bay.<sup>72</sup> On 20 November the *Imperieuse* answered signal 275 ('ship coming in to make known your name or number') from a warship in the bay and noted that there were three men-of-war anchored there. The breeze was on the ship's head, and progress was indirect and very slow, two knots at best. At six bells in the forenoon watch Cochrane ordered the ship's gig into the water and he was pulled over to the *Fame* to report to Bennett, now the senior British officer at Roses; the gig returned without its captain but with orders for the ship 'to make every effort to get within range of the enemy troops, so as to enfilade them'.<sup>73</sup>

Over the next thirty hours the *Imperieuse*'s log records 'working into Roses Bay', tacking through the variable wind as it veered and backed. At noon on 21 November the *Excellent* crossed her bows, heading to sea; the *Imperieuse* had made little headway and was still five miles from Roses, but in the late afternoon the senior lieutenant ordered her boats out to tow the ship and after an hour and a half of pulling she came to in the anchorage, recording brisk cannon-fire from the enemy towards Fort Trinity.<sup>74</sup>

Meanwhile, as soon as he had reported to Captain Bennett, Cochrane had been rowed ashore to assess the situation. He found that the outer lines of the town were in French hands, the Citadel's outer defences were over-run, the inner walls were

severely damaged, and that the south-west bastion had already been taken.<sup>75</sup> The fall of Roses was imminent.

Cochrane also inspected Trinity Castle and decided he could effectively reinforce it to maintain naval command of the Bay for a time, and thereby continue to block the French advance into eastern Spain for as long as possible. He started with an amphibious assault on 23 November, men of the *Imperieuse* joining forces with Royal Marines from the *Fame* and 300 Spanish troops from the Citadel, landing in a sandy cove to north-eastward of Trinity Castle, and attacking the French gun emplacements on the slopes of Puig Rom.<sup>76</sup> Unlike many 'Journals of the Proceedings' of Royal Navy ships, which too often merely resemble grocer's bills or meteorological records, the captain's and master's logs of the *Imperieuse* are businesslike, succinct but often exciting. The captain's log for the early hours of the forenoon of 23 November reads like an outline for a chapter of a novel by C.S. Forrester:<sup>77</sup>

- 1.00 AM Calm and Clear. Boats loading Troops at Fort Trinity to storm the Enemy's Batteries.
- 2.00 Beat to Quarters. Sent Gig, Yawl and Jolly Boat to draw the attention of the Enemy to Westward.
- 3.00 Obs'd the Troops attacking the Enemy on the Hills. Opened our Fire on the Mortar Batteries which were set with Shell at intervals.
- 4.00 Boats ret'n'd. A Shell bursting over us cut several parts of our Rigging.

According to the watch lieutenant's and captain's logs of the *Fame*, the French threw in reinforcements against the assault, and the Spanish seemingly would not drive home the attack led by the British Marines. The allies were repulsed with the loss of 10 men including a British officer, Edward Watkins, master's mate of the *Fame*, and 20 wounded, including four Royal Marines.<sup>78</sup> Boats collected the allied force off the beach below the castle at 5.30 that morning as daylight was breaking. However, the assault had given Cochrane a clear picture of the strength and tactical approach of French forces investing the castle. Such attention to tactical intelligence was typical of this officer's careful planning, enabling him to minimise potential losses. Jahleel Brenton, his brother Captain Edward Brenton, and Frederick Marryat each remarked on Cochrane's care for the lives of his men, Jahleel Brenton stating that it was one of the most admirable aspects of Cochrane's nature, and Marryat, who experienced a wide variety of effective and ineffective officers in his career, writing after his retirement: 'I never knew anyone so careful of the lives of his ship's company as Lord Cochrane, or any who calculated so closely the risks attending any expedition'.<sup>79</sup>

Bennett knew Cochrane's capacity for audacious but successful action, and at a conference on board the *Fame* on the evening of 23 November attended by the British naval commanders and Spanish and Catalan officers (including Capitán Josef Benito, the adjutant of the Fija de Roses regiment in the Citadel, who kept a daily journal throughout the siege), the squadron commodore was happy to go along with the plans Cochrane put forward.<sup>80</sup> As he stated in his dispatch to Lord Collingwood of 5 December, based on the fleet commander's personal orders Cochrane now assumed command of British operations ashore.<sup>81</sup>

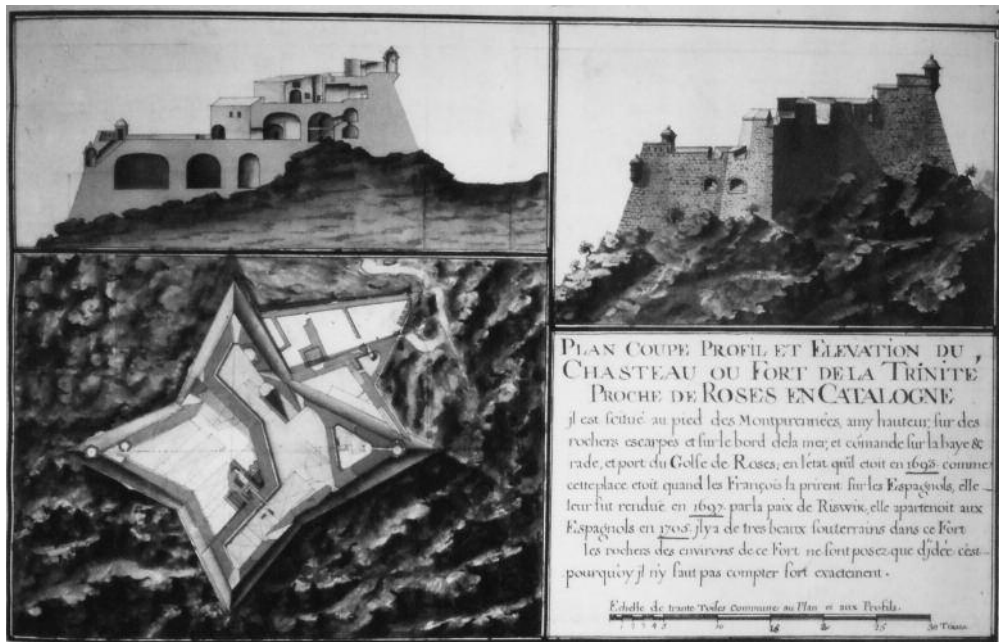


Figure 4 Plan of Trinity Castle as it was before the siege in 1808 (Museu Ciutadela de Roses).

### COCHRANE'S DEFENCE OF TRINITY CASTLE

On 24 November, in the dark of the early morning, Cochrane's 'favourite time for attacks of any kind', the boats of the *Imperieuse* came ashore again, beaching on four flat basalt rocks at the foot of the headland of Cap Sant Adreu. Using knotted ropes let down from the castle walls, Cochrane and 50 officers and men from the *Imperieuse* scaled the western slopes of 'la Poncella de Roses', and entered the beleaguered castle by a seaward embrasure; 30 Royal Marines joined them after sunset (see Fig. 4).<sup>82</sup>

The exhausted Catalan militia and Spanish troops who had defended the castle with Royal Marines from the *Excellent* and the *Fame* for two weeks and had held on alone for two days under intense fire, were replaced on 26 November by a new unit of *miquelets*, soldiers from the Spanish Bourbon regiment, and a fresh company of the Regiment of Ultonia, a force originally formed as an Irish 'wild geese' regiment in Spain in 1709 and at this time still commanded by officers of Irish descent.<sup>83</sup>

Cochrane now had a force of 80 British, 100 Spanish and up to 50 or so Catalans, all reasonably fresh and in good spirits. They took up defensive positions inside the seaward bastion of Trinity, and along its main rampart, which was protected from the French guns above by the two higher inland bastions, and from which they could fire their muskets and light field pieces on the besiegers below. Under his direction they plugged the breaches in the outer walls with barricades of barrels and spars, hammock bags and corn-sacks filled with sand, and palisades strung with large fish hooks on chains, possibly the first use of 'barbed wire' in warfare, and then settled in for a gruelling duel of wits and courage under terrible conditions of danger and privation.



On the ridge of Puig Rom directly above Trinity, batterie no. 12 had been joined by another *batterie de la brèche*, and their six 24-livre cannon and two 6-livre field pieces directed intense and accurate fire. Although the gun barrels could not be depressed enough to hit the base of the walls, when Cochrane entered the castle the French had already destroyed the tourette guard-post, the highest point of the castle, and had made a large breach in the landward bastion about fifty feet above ground. A new battery of mortars, no. 14, opened fire from its position on the track below the castle, posing a threat to the men on the ramparts.<sup>84</sup> During this phase of the siege at Trinity up to 300 rounds of cannon balls weighing up to 26 pounds each were accurately fired at the castle each day from close range.<sup>85</sup> Cochrane himself felt the effect of this intense bombardment on his second day at Trinity, being hit in the face by a piece of stone sheered off by a roundshot hitting the wall close by, requiring immediate surgery to his mouth and nose. In severe pain but disdaining to leave his post, Cochrane sent for Dr James Guthrie, the surgeon of the *Imperieuse* (and the man who had conned the *Speedy* alone during the taking of *El Gamo* in 1801), who scaled the headland to enter the castle, where he stayed for the duration of the siege.<sup>86</sup>

In addition to artillery fire, the French made several assaults on the entry-ports and the breaches in the walls. During one major assault many French guards were killed by fused shrapnel shells which Cochrane had hung on ropes along the walls – two hundred years later the corroded fragments of unexploded shells were found in the ruins during excavation.<sup>87</sup> On another occasion, a French round shot away the post flying the Spanish flag, which fluttered to the ground in front of the fortress. Cochrane strode out of the main gate and, under musket fire from the enemy tirailleurs and with French cavalry racing up the road towards him, retrieved the flag of his allies, waving it gaily as he strode back into the castle.<sup>88</sup>

On 29 November the French broke through the lines of the new town, forcing the defenders there inside the Citadel. This enabled them to position batteries among the buildings of the fishing port, enfilading the beach and preventing the Navy's boat landings of provisions, munitions and medical supplies under the Citadel's sea-gate, or the evacuation of the citizens and wounded soldiers as Admiral Gravina had done fourteen years before.<sup>89</sup> The French increased their artillery attacks on the Citadel, and the conditions inside the old fortified town grew even worse for civilians and soldiers alike.<sup>90</sup>

At dawn on 30 November 1,200 French carabiniers and grenadiers and Italian voltigeurs attempted to break through the breach in Trinity's landward tower, but they found themselves inside a deadly trap (**Fig. 5**). Below the hole which the French guns had made was a wooden floor over an arched stone vault, the ceiling of the internal entrance hall of the castle; on first taking over the defence of Trinity, Cochrane had the planks and beams of the floor removed and had broken through the crown of the vault creating a pit, 50-feet deep. Out of the planks the men, under the direction of the *Imperieuse's* carpenter, William Lodwick, made a large slide 'exactly like the hopper of a mill' into the pit, coating it with greasy slush from the ship's cooking ovens.<sup>91</sup> As the assault troops reached the walls, many French soldiers were killed as they could not turn back from the top of this trap due to the pressure of the men advancing behind them; those who saw the trap in time and managed to get some kind of hand-hold on the stonework were shot by the defenders. The spirit of the assaulting troops wavered, although Cochrane noted that one French officer





**Figure 5** The vault beneath the breach in the landward bastion, Trinity Castle, prior to reconstruction (author's photograph, December 2004).

at the mouth of the trap displayed conspicuous bravery and Cochrane declined to shoot at him; the French officer 'bowed as politely as if on parade' and turned back from the breach, 'the last man to quit the walls'.<sup>92</sup>

Such gallantry and chivalry were shown by both sides during the defence of Trinity, but there was no doubt that the French were determined to take Roses and secure their supply routes to the south, and to do that they had to capture the castle commanding the Bay. So the attacks on Trinity Castle were unrelenting and the defence wearisome under unpleasant conditions of danger, noise, dirt, cold and lack of provisions. But Cochrane instituted the naval system of watches, the off-watch men sleeping and eating in the officers' quarters of the castle, a large casemate off the main rampart, its fan-vaulted stone ceiling curving from massive buttresses.<sup>93</sup> The walls – at this level over 3 metres thick – kept out the incessant roar of the guns and reverberations of roundshot hitting the landward bastion.

By 2 December the weather was changing, with the onshore north-easterly winds of the *tramontana* gaining strength. This dangerous situation forced the British ships to sail a mile or so from the rocky shoreline, too far for effective bombardment of the French lines, only Cochrane's *Imperieuse* remaining on station half a mile SSW and in the lee of the Castle. Collingwood, on station off Toulon, had heard of the deteriorating military situation from Captain West on 1 December and despatched reinforcements to Roses; the *Magnificent* (74), Captain George Eyre, joined Bennett's squadron on 3 December and the *Lucifer* rejoined that evening.

However, the British ships could not risk closing a lee shore, and this emasculation of naval firepower gave the French complete control of the town and its environs down to the shoreline. On 4 December the attacks on the Citadel were particularly fierce and the governor of Roses reopened discussions with General Reille about terms for a surrender.<sup>94</sup> During the afternoon the weather deteriorated further, with squalls and a high swell running from the north-east presaging a storm at sea. Time was running out and Cochrane telegraphed a signal to the *Imperieuse* to send up barrels of gunpowder; the master's log entry is laconic:<sup>95</sup>

*Remarks ye HMS Imperieuse Mon 5th Dec 08* [sic, this was the afternoon of Sunday 4 December, see footnote]

Off Fort Trinity

1 PM Carried out a kedge and two hawsers for a spring. Sent powder to ye Fort.

6 PM Rec'd sig'l to warp nearer ye castle.

9 PM Died of his wounds a Spanish Soldier.

12 Committed his body to ye deep.

During the night of 4/5 December the French tried one more assault at Trinity. Hundreds of the enemy silently approached the fortress from the road leading up to the ridge and placed siege ladders against the walls under the breaches made by French artillery; the alarm was given in time, allowing the defenders to prevent the soldiers from entering the castle once more.<sup>96</sup>

Below, the guns of the Citadel had fallen silent.<sup>97</sup> Its defence was unsustainable and to avoid further bloodshed its Governor capitulated at noon on 5 December. Cochrane had been forewarned of this, and earlier in the morning he signalled to the *Imperieuse*; the forenoon entries in the Master's and Captain's Logs tell the story of the action as it unfolded:<sup>98</sup>

*Remarks ye HMS Imperieuse Mon 5th Dec 08*

9 AM Hove close in to cover the retreat from ye castle.

At noon obs'd the Citadel to surrender.

*Remarks for Monday 5th Dec 1808*

7.00 AM Sent weekly Audit to the *Fame*.

8.00 Answ'd sundry Telegraph Sig's from the Shore & Sig'd for all Boats armed.

9.00 Hove close in Shore to cover the Retreat of our People from the Fort.

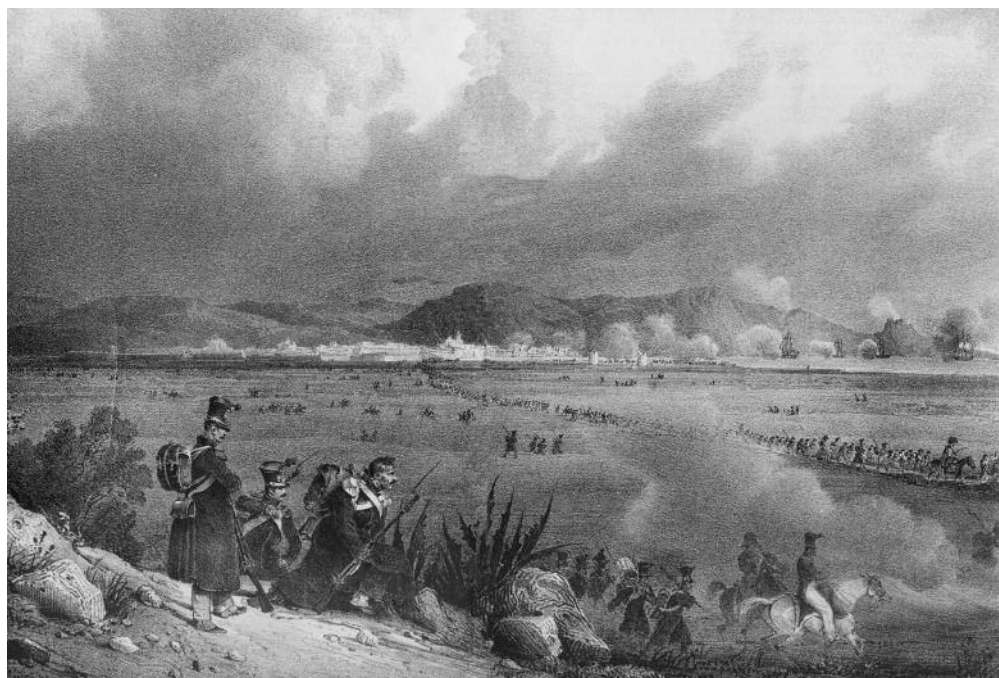
11.00 *Fame & Magnificent* under weigh.

Cochrane knew that once the French could turn all their artillery to bear upon the castle, its walls would soon be reduced to rubble and the vastly superior numbers of the French infantry would then quickly overpower the defenders. To compound the issue, the storm was now in the offing and the *Fame* and her small squadron (now including two merchant vessels captured at Cadaquès by boats from the *Fame* on 28 November) prepared to stand further out from the land, with no certainty as to when they could come in again to resupply the defenders' dwindling reserves in Trinity or to give covering fire for a retreat.<sup>99</sup>

Cochrane decided that the game was up, as his captain's log for 5 December records:<sup>100</sup>

*Bearing and distance at Noon* Single Anchor off Fort Trinity N by E 4 cables

1.00PM Sent all Boats man'd & arm'd to embark Spanish troops & Marines from Fort, *Fame & Magnificent* covering under a brisk Fire from Enemy's Forts & small arms on the Hills.



**Figure 6** A contemporary French lithograph of the end of the Siege of Roses 1808, with Catalan and Spanish soldiers being escorted to their incarceration in Figueres, showing the Citadel in the middle ground, the British squadron in the Bay, and Trinity Castle in the background; while giving a good impression of the terrain and buildings at this time and of the scale of military operations, the information shown is incorrect, as the British ships were all standing out to sea as the prisoners left the Citadel on the morning of 6 December 1808 (Museu Ciutadela de Roses).

- 2.30 Weighed & made sail having got all the Troops off without loss & having made Fire & laid a train to blow up the Castle. The Guns we rendered totally unserviceable & threw over the walls.

Intending to deny the enemy the use of this stronghold guarding naval access to the port, Cochrane had placed the gunpowder barrels, sent up from his ship during the previous afternoon, in the Great Hall under the main rampart, with others he had set there on first joining the garrison.<sup>101</sup> After the rest of the defenders had left Cochrane and William Burney, his Master Gunner, lit the port-fires and escaped down the cliff to a waiting cutter.<sup>102</sup>

As the *Imperieuse* picked up her commander and headed out to sea the first set of gunpowder barrels exploded, sending an immense column of flame and shattered stone into the afternoon sky, completely destroying the seaward bastion and the main rampart, and cracking the outer walls of the landward bastion, the force of the explosion moving one entire wall outwards by over 10 inches.<sup>103</sup> Rubble falling back from the explosion seems to have knocked out the remaining fuse-trains and the second set of barrels did not explode, so the castle was not totally destroyed as Cochrane had planned. The French were able to make enough repairs to the remaining middle bastion and its small rampart over the following month to take command of the bay, completing their primary strategy for Roses (see Fig. 6).<sup>104</sup>

## THE IMPORTANCE OF COCHRANE'S TACTICS AT ROSES

Naval actions are most often about gaining or maintaining control of land, and although there was always a naval component to the many assaults on Roses throughout its history and command of the seaward approach was vital, complete success there depended also upon control of the beachhead. Once Reille's troops secured the latter they could enfilade British boats coming ashore to rearm the Citadel, already poorly provisioned after long neglect and a vigorous siege. While the weather held, the squadron could close the shore, bombard French lines and hold off their advance, but once the need to stand off became paramount a purely naval defence of the town became impracticable and the cause was lost, as Collingwood had predicted in his letter to Vives. The British had maritime superiority, but once the French had gained the beachhead, and then the Citadel and Trinity Castle, their littoral territory was secure, Figueres was safe, and their advance into eastern Spain could continue.<sup>105</sup>

So the Siege of Roses ended in a stalemate; although the French had achieved what they needed, it was at a price and they could not make the most of their new possession. They garrisoned Roses strongly and repelled a number of small assaults, including an amphibious landing by Admiral Cotton's north-western Mediterranean squadron under Edward Codrington in April 1811. Roses would remain in French hands until their general retreat from Catalonia in 1814, when they abandoned the port, their last major possession on the Catalonia coast, having reduced the Citadel and destroyed the town's public buildings and administrative records.

The loss of Roses in 1808 was a serious blow to the Spanish, as Collingwood wrote to the First Lord of the Admiralty in January 1809: 'Roses was very important to them; they cannot recover it again but with great difficulty.'<sup>106</sup>

It seems, then, that the Siege of Roses in 1808 was a failure for the Anglo-Spanish forces; however, the bravery and tenacity of all the defenders there, supported by the courage and tactical ability of the Royal Navy, had made it very difficult for the French to reinforce their armies in eastern and south-eastern Spain, Napoleon's right flank in the Mediterranean theatre, for almost a year and made their initial strategy redundant. Up to 13,800 infantry, cavalry, artillery and engineers, more than three-quarters of the entire *Armée de Catalogne* in the peninsula, were to be tied down at Roses for months.<sup>107</sup> For the second half of 1808, the first year of the Peninsular War in Spain – and for some months afterwards as the cruel Pyrenean winter closed the mountain pass and Collingwood's ships tightened their control of the sea-lanes – the enemy's logistical supply to its troops in the east of the peninsula was erratic, its assault on Girona delayed, its garrison at Barcelona beleaguered and its strategic progress into central and southern Spain from the north-eastern border was halted.

The Royal Navy's defence of Roses was an unusual operation, and a vital one. Cochrane's part in it was exceptional, as Lord Collingwood noted in a letter to his old friend Admiral William Waldegrave, Lord Radstock:

Captain West, at Rosas, and Lord Cochrane, in Trinity Castle, distinguished themselves very much: indeed, the defence which Lord Cochrane made, even after the breach was practicable [to a French assault], redounds highly to his honour and reputation as an officer.<sup>108</sup>

Cochrane's quick understanding of the possibility of defending Trinity Castle and his determination to reinstate the withdrawn British support there, were combined



with a vigorous approach which ensured that any French success would be long delayed and dearly bought, and he inspired all the defenders of the castle to new heights of aggressive defence. Cochrane, his men of the *Imperieuse*, and their Spanish and Catalan allies, held Trinity Castle during the most dangerous phase of its investment, the final eleven days during which the French intensified their day and night bombardment and mounted serious assaults on the entry-ports and walls. At the same time the growing masses of French besieging the Citadel on the plains below intensified their artillery bombardment there, using exploding shells and langridge as well as iron roundshot, and tightened their grip around its crumbling walls. This was the critical period of the Siege of Roses in 1808, which lasted exactly a month from 6 November but which in reality had begun six months before when General Reille first tried to take the town. And of course, in the end the French had won.

Collingwood, Cochrane and the other sea-officers involved were always aware of the importance of Roses to Royal Navy operations and to British strategy in the south of the European theatre of conflict. In an echo of the Duke of Northumberland's letter to Lord Collingwood and views expressed in newspaper editorials throughout 1808, Cochrane addressed the House of Commons in 1811 and again in 1812 restating his own ideas given to the Admiralty two years before, to put pressure on the French army in Figueres, 'the key to Catalonia', by recapturing Roses, stationing a squadron of Royal Navy vessels there. Manned with trained amphibious soldiers this base and its mobile attack force would pose a threat which would have kept the enemy's communications and supply logistics in disarray along the entire coastline of Catalonia and southern France.<sup>109</sup>

This bold strategy did not find favour with those in power in London, at least not with Cochrane in charge. George Mundy's aggressive blockade of Barcelona and Edward Codrington's sea-borne support of Tarragona locked down the French in southern Catalonia and required them to stretch their troops to protect supply land-trains.<sup>110</sup> A version of Cochrane's strategy successfully employed by Sir Home Popham's squadron off the coast of northern Spain in the summer of 1812, tied General Caffarelli's troops there, preventing a major reinforcement of Marmont's army facing Lord Wellington at Salamanca.<sup>111</sup> Popham's successful sea-borne assault of Santander then gave Wellington a logistics base closer to home ports than his previous supply bases in Portugal, and created a deep beach-head for expeditionary forces in the region, proving Cochrane's strategy to be viable and effective.

Among the many exploits for which Cochrane achieved fame in his own lifetime and which resonate today, the defence of Trinity Castle at Roses in 1808 stands out. It exemplifies his personal courage, his leadership, attention to detail and regard for the lives of the people under his command, and his strategic awareness. The action may have been a small element in a long campaign waged by the Spanish and British against French occupation of the Iberian Peninsula, but it was important. If the Citadel had been properly repaired, provisioned, armed and reinforced with a larger garrison in good time the French would have been held down for longer. If Cochrane's offensive strategy had been deployed, with a vigorous amphibious assault from the sea, making Roses both a base for naval attack squadrons, and a beach-head for the recapture of Figueres, the French invasion of eastern Spain, already under strain, would very probably have collapsed and the allies would have had a second front, with good supply lines and the Royal Navy's protection to its rear.



### POSTSCRIPT

In his career as an officer in the British navy and the nascent navies of Chile, Brazil and Greece, Cochrane became a highly experienced and successful commander of small squadrons and amphibious operations. He never lost faith in his strategy for Catalonia and, with his noted concern for the lives of his men, at the end of his life he was still disappointed that it had not been adopted. If it had been, with mobile assault squadrons based at Roses landing expeditionary troops at key points along Napoleon's right flank in the Mediterranean, the prosecution of the Peninsular War could have been very different, French military resources being over-stretched on two fronts or at the least, Spanish forces from Catalonia being free to support Wellington in central Spain. Such a strategy may very well have shortened the war, twisting the knife in the 'Spanish Ulcer' on Napoleon's southern right flank, and reducing the dreadful butcher's bill.

### *Acknowledgements*

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### *References*

1 The action at Aix Roads – also known as the battle of the Basque Roads – took place on 11, 12 and 13 April 1809 in the estuary of the Charente River on the south-west coast of France. Admiral Lord Gambier's Channel fleet was dispatched to put into action a plan initially given to the Admiralty by Lord Cochrane in 1806; on his return to England in 1809 Cochrane was directed by the Admiralty to lead a squadron of fireships and Cochrane's new invention 'explosion ships', against the French Brest fleet already under blockade by a British squadron and at anchor in the Basque Roads. Cochrane's attack squadron broke through the defence booms across the estuary by the Île d'Aix and engaged the enemy, who then tried to escape leading to many French vessels being grounded as the tide fell. Cochrane telegraphed

the British fleet that the roadstead was open to the British line-of-battle ships to engage, but although the signals were acknowledged, Gambier took no action and the attack was terminated. The French line-of-battle ships had scattered to avoid the fireships and many were burnt or damaged by grounding, but most were recovered and the Brest fleet was not permanently incapacitated by this incomplete action. Cochrane's opposition in the House of Commons to a vote of thanks for Gambier led to the Admiral insisting on a court martial to clear his name of the imputation of neglect of duty. Manipulation of the court martial – such as the ruling-out as evidence of charts used by the attack squadron and the posting overseas of a prime witness – ensured that Gambier was exonerated, and as a consequence Cochrane was

removed from active command in the Royal Navy.

2 Most biographical accounts of Cochrane's action at Roses in Nov and Dec 1808 are taken almost verbatim from his autobiography or from the naval histories by William James and Edward Brenton, and are frequently repetitive, with lacunae and mistakes. While much of Cochrane's recollections dictated fifty years after the event can be verified by documentary evidence, there are occasional lapses. Cochrane's biographers appear to have largely neglected the primary evidence for the action at Roses, and seem to conflate other events at Roses into their story of Trinity Castle, possibly from Frederick Marryat's fictional (but often historically accurate) accounts. None of Cochrane's biographers place Roses in its strategic context, which Cochrane himself referred to in his autobiography and in speeches to Parliament during the later prosecution of the Peninsular War.

3 E. Grove, 'The Mediterranean Overview 1806–1815', paper given to *The Collingwood Years: Naval Strategy against Napoleon 1806–1810* conference, HMS *Collingwood*, Fareham, 13 Sept 2008; see also Vice-Admiral Denis Decrès, Minister of the Marine, to the Emperor Napoleon, Paris, Dec 1808, intercepted copy, The National Archives of England and Wales (hereafter NA) NA ADM 1/415, Admiralty In-letters from Commanders-in-chief, Mediterranean, 24 Jan 1809.

4 I am indebted to Captain Christopher Page RN, Head of the Naval Historical Branch, for this succinct and accurate interpretation of the Royal Navy's purpose in the European theatre in the years immediately after Trafalgar, in discussion with the author, Portsmouth 3 May 2006.

5 Studies of the Peninsular War mentioning Roses include: Sir Charles Oman, *A History of the Peninsular War* vol. V (London 1902–30); R. Thomas, *New Lights on the Peninsular War* (Almada 1991); C. Esdaile, *The Peninsular War: A New History* (London 2002), and several articles published in 1988; D. Gates, *The Spanish Ulcer: A History of the Peninsular War*, (London 2002); C.D. Hall, *Wellington's Navy: Sea Power and the Peninsular War, 1807–1814*, (London 2004); C. Vacani, *Storia*

*delle Campagne . . . in Spagna dal 1808–1813* (Firenze 1827); C.T. Beauvais de Préau, ed., *Victoires . . . des Français* tome 24 (Paris 1831); J. Belmas, *Journaux des sièges . . . dans la Péninsule de 1807 à 1814*, vol. I (Paris 1836); J. Gomez de Artèche y Moro, *Guerra de la Independencia* (Madrid 1881); J. Priego López ed., *Guerra de la Independencia 1808–1814*, vol. III *Segunda Campaña de 1808* (Madrid 1972); C. Martínez-Valverde, *La Marina en la Guerra de la Independencia* (Madrid 1974); A. Elorza, *La Aventura de la Historia* (Madrid. 2005), and C. Diàz Capmany, 'Roses, 1808', in J. Santalò ed., *El Setge de Roses 1808: tres visions de la Guerra del Francès* (Girona 2008). Most of these studies are fully cited in the following endnotes. There has not been a study of the Royal Navy's operations at Roses in 1808 and 1809 prior to the author's essay published in 2008 and cited below, nor an analysis of the importance of Cochrane's defence of Roses to British military aims published prior to this current article.

6 The town was seriously damaged and a large number of its civilian population killed by naval bombardment from Nationalist warships in 1936.

7 C. Masanés and J. Juanola, 'L'enigma de l'antiga Rhode', in *Sàpiens: descobreix la teva historia*, issue 34 (Barcelona, June 2005), 48–52.

8 N. Diàz Romañach, *Roses: una vila amb història* (Girona, 1991), 13 *et seq.*

9 M. Pujol, P. de la Fuente and X. Raurich, *Tres vaixells enfonsats a l'Empordà durant la Guerra del Francès* (Girona, 2003), 77 *et seq.*

10 Diàz Romañach, *Roses*, 80–85.

11 R.C. Anderson, 'The Sicilian War 1674–1678', *Mariner's Mirror*, 57 (1971), 240–2.

12 P. de la Fuente, *Les Fortificacions Reials del golf de Roses en l'època moderna* (Figueres, 1998), 197.

13 de la Fuente, *Fortificacions*, 204–24, and Diàz Romañach, *Roses*, 89.

14 Anonymous, *The Deplorable History of the Catalans, from their first engaging in the War, to the time of their Reductions*, published J. Baker (London 1714), 19.

15 C. Diàz Capmany, 'Roses 1808', 167.

16 General J. Gomez de Artèche y Moro, *Guerra de la Independencia: Historia Militar de Espana del 1808 a 1814* (Madrid 1881), tom IV, 266–7; Diàz Romañach, *Roses*, 98–107.

17 de la Fuente, *Fortifications*, 12.

18 *Ipswich Journal*, 30 Jul 1808: searchable electronic subscription alternate at 19th Century British Library Newspapers accessed 28 Apr 2009: <http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/>.

19 An excellent recent analysis of the insurgency against the French forces in Spain and their *afrancesado* supporters is given in the opening chapter of Gates, *The Spanish Ulcer*, 7–12.

20 M. Adams, *Admiral Collingwood, Nelson's Own Hero* (London 2005), 269.

21 Captain E.P. Brenton, *The Naval History of Great Britain from 1783 to 1822* (London 1825), vol. 4, 244.

22 R. Neillands, *Wellington and Napoleon: Clash of Arms* (London 1994), 55.

23 The difficulty of supplying Barcelona by land-train convoys is discussed by R. Thomas, 'British Operations on the Coast of Catalonia 1808–1811', in A.D. Berkeley ed., *New Lights on the Peninsular War*, selected papers of the International Congress on the Iberian Peninsula 1780–1840 (Almada 1991); in Gates, *The Spanish Ulcer*, 29; and in Hall, *Wellington's Navy*, 54–5.

24 R. Glover, 'The French Fleet 1807–1814: Britain's Problem and Madison's Opportunity', *Journal of Modern History*, 39:3 (1967), 238. Allemand was an old adversary of Cochrane's during the latter's command of the 'Golden' *Pallas* in the Atlantic, and they would meet again at Aix Roads in 1809, where Allemand, by then promoted to vice-admiral, had taken command of Willaumez's Brest fleet.

25 'Le général en chef décida à faire commencer de suite le siège de Rosas, cette place était de la plus importance pour les operations en Catalogne, à cause de la magnifique rade, qu'elle protège, et qui abritait les vaisseaux ennemis dans toutes les saisons. Une escadre Anglaise y était établie, et faur pouvait s'y maintenir, il devenait impossible de revitailler Barcelone par mer; par conséquent cette place devait tomber au pouvoir des Espagnols ver la fin du mois de décembre, ainsi que Duhesme l'écrivait au major-général.' Général Laurent, le Marquis de Gouvion Saint-Cyr, *Journal des operations de l'Armée de Catalogne en 1808 et 1809 par le même général* (Paris 1821), 28.

26 'L'occupation de Roses devenant aussi

utile à l'armée française qu'elle était facheuse pour les anglais, en les privant d'un entrepôt facile et commode au fournir aux insurgés des vivres et des munitions . . .' C.T. Beauvais de Préau ed., *Victoires, conquêtes, désastres, revers et guerres civiles des Français* etc, 2nd edn, (Paris 1831), tome 24, 228.

27 Captain Thomas, Lord Cochrane MP, speech to the House of Commons 22 February 1812, recorded in Cobbett's *Parliamentary Records* vol. XX (London 1812), 888–91.

28 Juan Manuel Alfaro Guixot, *Dues hores a el Castell de Sant Ferran* (Figueres 2006), 2 and *passim*.

29 '2,000 insurgés assiégeaient le fort de Figuières; on y avait heureusement laissé 300 français . . .'; 'Le 10 [of July], il réunissait sa division, qui arrivait des divers points de la France; il avait déjà 6,000 hommes . . .': extracts from Napoleon's note 'Composition of the Armée d'Espagne' to Joseph Bonaparte, King of Spain, 14 July 1808 in Napoleon Bonaparte, *Correspondance de Napoleon 1er, publiée par ordre de l'Empereur Napoleon III*, Plon-Dumaine edition, 32 vols (Paris 1858–70): searchable electronic public-access alternate accessed via dated index 10 May 2009: [www.histoire-empire.org/correspondance\\_de\\_napoleon](http://www.histoire-empire.org/correspondance_de_napoleon). Diàz Romañach, *Roses*, 106. Diàz Capmany, 'Roses 1808', 182–3.

30 'Du moment que vous serez maître de Figuières, il faut vous rendre maître de Rosas', in orders written by Napoleon at Bayonne 2 July 1808 to General Honoré Charles Reille at Bellegarde; 'L'opération la plus importante, après le déblocus de Figuières, est de désarmer Rosas', Napoleon to Reille, 8 Jul 1808; both in Napoleon, *Correspondance*. Reille would be one of Napoleon's main commanders at Waterloo in 1815.

31 Diàz Capmany, 'Roses 1808', 182–3.

32 Collingwood to the Earl of Mulgrave, *Ocean* off Malta, 21 Jan 1809, in G.L. Newnham Collingwood ed., *A selection from the public and private correspondence of Vice-Admiral Lord Collingwood*, 4th edn (London 1829), 482.

33 NA ADM 1/414 f. 272, Collingwood to General don Juan-Miquel de Vives, from the *Ocean* off Toulon, 28 Nov 1808.

34 Diàz Capmany, 'Roses 1808', 51.

35 Roses is mentioned in more than 50 of Nelson's official and personal letters from July 1803 to May 1805; his squadron orders show that he was in the Bay of Roses at least three times and the *Victory's* captain's journals for 1804 (NA ADM 51/1498 and NA ADM 51/1482) record her presence in or near the Gulf of Roses on several other occasions. In addition to frequently sailing across the Gulf between 1806 and 1810, Collingwood was in the Bay of Roses itself at least once during his command of the Mediterranean fleet, during an action of 31 Oct to 1 Nov 1809; for a detailed first-hand account of the action read Collingwood's letter to his sister Mary, 1 Nov 1809, in Newnham Collingwood, *Correspondence*, 302.

36 Analysis of Nelson's and Collingwood's letters and orders in the period 1803–9 indicates that the Gulf of Roses was used as often as the better-known rendezvous, the Maddalena Islands of Sardinia and Cape Sicié off Toulon. 'Rendezvous 97, under Cape Saint Sebastians' is the identifying description in Nelson's instruction, as commander-in-chief of the Mediterranean fleet, to Captain Frank Sotheron of the *Excellent*, 28 Apr 1804; Sir Nicholas Harris ed., *Letters and Dispatches of Vice-Admiral Lord Nelson* (London, 1845), vol. V, 521. See also the reference to Nelson's 'normal station' in G. Bennett, *Nelson the Commander* (London 1972), 229. For the communication of intelligence via Roses, see the author's three-part article 'Edward Gayner, the Royal Navy's man at Roses', in *The Nelson Dispatch*, Nelson Society (Oct 2008, Feb 2009 and Apr 2009).

37 Collingwood's use of Rendezvous 97 to overwinter the fleet from 1806 is stated in his letter to William Wellesley Pole, Secretary to the Admiralty, 16 Sept 1809, quoted in E. Hughes ed., *The private correspondence of Admiral Lord Collingwood* (NRS, 1957), 254 footnote.

38 Among other documents indicating Collingwood's planning of frigate rotation to cover Roses, see British Library Adm MSS 14276 ff. 124, 128, 136, etc.

39 Diáz Capmany, 'Roses 1808', 52.

40 The Duke of Northumberland to Lord Collingwood, Syon, 20 Jun 1808, in Hughes, *Correspondence*, 245.

41 *Morning Chronicle*, 21 and 22 Oct 1808: searchable electronic subscription alternate at 19th Century British Library Newspapers, accessed 28 Apr 2009: <http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/>.

42 Collingwood to Mulgrave, 16 Mar 1809, in Newnham Collingwood, *Correspondence*, 503; Admiral Sir Edward Pellew to Henry Wellesley, 11 Jul 1811, NA WO 1/726 f. 369; see also Pellew to J.W. Croker, First Secretary to the Board of Admiralty, NA ADM 1/415 (In-letters from Commanders-in-chief, Mediterranean), 12 Jul 1811.

43 Analysis of the dates, types and armament of French warship launches and commissioning to service at Toulon, Genoa and Venice between 1805 and 1810, from Lt de Vaisseau J-M Roche, *Dictionnaire des bâtiments de la flotte de guerre Française de Colbert à nos jours*, tome I, 1671–1870 (Paris 2005), and J. Boudriot, *The History of the French Frigate 1650–1850* (Paris 1993). See also P. Masson, 'The English Navy and Army against Napoleon 1805–1815', in *Souvenir Napoléon*, tome 400, Académie Française de Marine 1995, *passim*.

44 Glover, 'The French Fleet, 1807–1814', 234–43 and 245–6, especially footnote 8.

45 NA ADM 1/415, Collingwood to W.W. Pole, 24 Jan 1809.

46 For more information about the Royal Navy's operations at Roses in the Napoleonic Wars see J. Reay, 'The Royal Navy in the Bay of Roses 1808–1809', in *El Setge de Roses 1808*, 240–84.

47 J. Belmas, *Journaux des sièges faits ou soutenus par les Français dans la Péninsule de 1807 à 1814*, vol. I (Paris 1836), 200–25.

48 Roses was a major source of wine, brandy, honey and lavender oil for the British market at this period, and the business continued after Spain's new alliance with France from Dec 1804, with Catalan officials increasingly ignoring Napoleon's economic blockade against British trade; J. Reay, 'Edward Gayner', part 3, in *The Nelson Dispatch* (April 2009).

49 A detailed account of this action is given in Reay, in *El Setge de Roses 1808*, 248–52, and in J. Reay, "'To Render an Effectual Service": Collingwood's "Star Captains" on the coast of Catalonia', in *The*

*Trafalgar Chronicle*, vol. 17 (The 1805 Club 2007), 75–8. It is only briefly mentioned elsewhere, notably in W. James, *Naval History of Great Britain*, vol. V (London, 1837), 53, and in T. Pocock, ‘Remember Nelson!’ *the Life of Sir William Hoste* (London 1977), 34–5.

50 NA ADM 1/415, Captain Robert Otway, *Actual State of the Province of Catalonia at this Instant*, intelligence report to Vice-Admiral Lord Collingwood, 23 Jul 1808.

51 NA ADM 51/1808 Captain’s Log, HM Ship *Montagu*, 17 to 28 Jul 1808.

52 NA ADM 51/1808 Captain’s Log, HM Ship *Montagu*, 28 July 1808. Capitán de Navío C. Martínez-Valverde, *La Marina en la Guerra de la Independencia* (Madrid 1974), 89.

53 C. Vacani, *Storia delle Campagne e Degli Assedj degl’ Italiani in Spagna del MDCCCVIII al MDCCCXIII* (Firenze 1827), vol. I, 246. Gouvion Saint-Cyr *Journal*, 18.

54 Belmas, *Journaux*, 434

55 James, *Naval History*, vol. IV, 310.

56 NA ADM 51/1873 Captain’s Log, HM Ship *Excellent*, 6 Nov 1808.

57 NA ADM 1/414 f. 272 Captain John West’s dispatch to Admiral Lord Collingwood, His Majesty’s Ship *Excellent* off the Bay of Roses, 21 Nov 1808; also published in extract in *The Naval Chronicle*, vol. XXI, Jan–Jun 1809 (London 1809), 130.

58 *Ibid.*, West to Collingwood, 21 Nov 1808.

59 Beauvais de Préau ed., ‘Plan du Siège de Rosas’, *Victoires*, 226; Belmas, *Journaux*, 438 *et seq.*, Capitán don Josef Benito, *El Diario de un Sitiado: relación histórica de los sucesos ocurridos en Rosas en el año 1808*, manuscript written at Roses and Figueres, 1808, (published Figueres 1926), 14.

60 NA ADM 51/1873 Captain’s Log, *Excellent*, 20 Nov 1808.

61 NA ADM 51/1873 Captain’s Log, *Excellent*, 21 Nov 1808, and NA ADM 51/2462 Captain’s Log, *Imperieuse*, 20 to 22 Nov 1808.

62 National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (hereafter NMM), *The Commissioned Sea-Officers of the Royal Navy 1660–1815* (Greenwich 1955), vol. 1, 177.

63 Frederick Marryat, who joined the *Imperieuse* in Sept 1806 as a 15-year-old ‘gentleman volunteer’ and was Cochrane’s aide-

de-camp ashore at Roses, clearly used Lord Cochrane as the model for his captain in his first novel *Frank Mildmay*, and Cochrane appears often in Marryat’s other books in the guise of the more interesting and effective officers. Marryat had an honourable and varied naval career, and was awarded the Royal Humane Society gold medal and received 27 certificates of commendation from his commanding officers for attempting to save the lives of sailors wounded or lost overboard; he was made captain, brought home the news of Napoleon’s death on St Helena, and became a governor of Greenwich Hospital, but retired from the service in early middle age, after which he wrote many popular novels, several of them autobiographical.

64 J.J. Colledge, revised B. Warlow, *Ships of the Royal Navy: The Complete Record of All Fighting Ships of the Royal Navy from the 15th Century to the Present* (London 2006).

65 NMM Dr 2017, ‘Sheer Draft of the *Imperieuse* taken at Plymouth Dockyard, June 1806’.

66 Thomas Cochrane, 10th Earl of Dundonald, *The Autobiography of a Seaman*, vol. I (London 1860), 236. Florence Marryat, ed., *Life and Letters of Captain Marryat* (London 1872), vol. I, 49.

67 BL Add MSS 14276 f. 202, Collingwood to Cochrane, *Ocean* off Cadiz, 21 Jun 1808.

68 Orders from Lord Collingwood to Lord Cochrane, 21 Jun 1808, quoted in Cochrane, *Autobiography*, 255. NA ADM 51/2462 Captain’s Log, *Imperieuse*, Jun to Sept 1808. NA ADM 51/1950 Captain’s Log, *Spartan*, Mar 1808 to Feb 1809. Henry Raikes, *Memoir of the Life and Services of Vice-Admiral Sir Jahleel Brenton KCB* (London 1846), 336.

69 NA ADM 51/2462 Captain’s Log, *Imperieuse*, 18 to 23 Sept 1808.

70 ‘Spanish Papers, Madrid Oct 6’, in *The Times*, 31 Oct 1808: searchable electronic subscription alternate at 19th Century British Library Newspapers, accessed 28 Apr 2009: <http://find.galegroup.com/bncnl/>.

71 Cochrane, *Autobiography*, 282–3; NA ADM 51/2462 Captain’s Log, *Imperieuse*, 18–24 Sept 1808.



72 Cochrane, *Autobiography*, 294.

73 NA ADM 51/2462 Captain's Log, *Imperieuse*, 22 Nov 1808; Cochrane, *Autobiography*, 294.

74 NA ADM 51/2462 Captain's Log, *Imperieuse*, 20 to 22 Nov 1808.

75 NA ADM 1/415 Lord Cochrane's dispatch to Vice-Admiral Lord Collingwood, from the *Imperieuse*, 5 Dec 1808, (a version edited by the Admiralty Secretary was published in the *London Gazette*, 17 Mar 1809).

76 Cochrane, *Autobiography*, 272. Map of attacks during the siege drawn by Captain Benito, reproduced in Romañach, *Roses*, 113. Artillery batteries shown on 'Plan du Siège de Rosas en 1808', in *Victoires*, tome 24, 226.

77 NA ADM 51/2462 Captain's Log, *Imperieuse*, 23 Nov 1808.

78 Belmas, *Journaux*, 440; NA ADM 53/518 Supplementary (Watch Lieutenants') Log, *Fame*, 23 Nov 1808; Cochrane *Autobiography*, 272.

79 Raikes, *Brenton*, 339. Florence Marryat, *Captain Marryat*, vol. I, 28.

80 Benito, *Diario*, 17

81 '... as the senior officer in the bay had not officially altered the order I received from your Lordship, to give every possible assistance to the Spaniards, I thought this a good opportunity, by occupying a post on which the acknowledged safety of the Citadel depended, to render them an effectual service'. Extract from Cochrane's dispatch to Collingwood 5 Dec 1808.

82 NA ADM 51/2462 Captain's Log, *Imperieuse*, forenoon and afternoon 24 Nov 1808; Cochrane, *Autobiography*, 302; author's observations at site.

83 D. Murphy, *The Irish Brigades 1686–2006* (Dublin, 2007), 54–5; in Jul 1808 Collingwood corresponded at Girona with the Ultonian's colonel-in-chief, General John O'Donovan, by that time the only Irish-born officer serving in the three Irish 'wild geese' regiments in Spain.

84 Belmas, *Journaux*, 434; Beauvais de Préau ed., 'Plan du Siège de Rosas en 1808', *Victoires*, 226; Cochrane, *Autobiography*, 302.

85 French livres (a measure of weight) were equal to approximately 1.1 English pounds weight; in his dispatch Cochrane stated

the French guns at Puig Rom to be a battery of three 24-pounders, but during the siege a second battery (batterie no. 13) was added alongside the first, and a mortar battery (batterie no. 14) set up on the track leading to the town. Belmas states batterie no. 12 to comprise three 24-livre guns 'de la brèche' and two 6-livre field pieces; batterie no. 13 was three 24-livre guns, giving a total of eight artillery pieces throwing a combined weight in excess of 158 pounds of shot engaging Trinity Castle: Beauvais de Préau ed., 'Plan du Siège de Rosas en 1808', *Victoires*, 226; Belmas, *Journaux*, 438, Benito, *Diario*, 14 and passim; Cochrane to Collingwood, 5 Dec 1808.

86 Cochrane, *Autobiography*, 305.

87 Author's discussion with Germa Vieyra Bosch, archaeologist, Trinity Castle, 8 Nov 2008.

88 *Gazeta de Gerona*, 1 Jan 1809; this astonishing incident was also reported in several British publications of the time including the *Edinburgh Annual Register* for 1809 (page 506), and accurately recalled by Cochrane for his autobiography published fifty years later.

89 The inability of the British to emulate Admiral Gravina's evacuation of the civilians and wounded in 1795, as requested by the governor of the Citadel following initial discussions on capitulation with General Reille on 28 Nov, was mentioned with disapproval by Gouvion Saint-Cyr (*Journaux*, 50) and Belmas, and by later Spanish historians, but it was General Rutý's artillery on the shoreline which prevented this humanitarian operation, destroying a British boat and damaging others when they attempted an evacuation landing on 30 Nov; NA ADM 51/1920 Captain's Log, *Fame*, forenoon 30 Nov 1808.

90 Benito, *Diario*, 24.

91 Cochrane, *Autobiography*, 304 and 311.

92 Cochrane, *Autobiography*, 310–11.

93 Author's discussion with Miquel Capdevila, reconstruction architect, Trinity Castle, 8 Nov 2008.

94 Initial negotiations were held on 28 Nov (Benito, *Diario*, 22); a copy of the surrender terms was published in Belmas, *Journaux*, appendix 'Pièces Justificatives'.

95 NA ADM 52/4149 Master's Log,

*Imperieuse*, 5/4 Dec 1808; although the Royal Navy had adopted 'civil time' by 1805, the master's log on this ship, in common with many at this period, maintained the old maritime tradition of starting the ship's day at noon of the previous calendar day. There are also occasional mistakes in dating the year in this journal.

96 Cochrane, *Autobiography*, 297–316, and Frederick Marryat, *Frank Mildmay*, 85–6.

97 Gouvion Saint-Cyr, *Journal*, 51; Benito, *Diario*, 27.

98 NA ADM 52/4149 Master's Log, *Imperieuse*, forenoon 5 Dec 1808; NA ADM 51/2462 Captain's Log, *Imperieuse*, 5 Dec 1808.

99 NA ADM 51/1943 Captain's Log, *Meteor*, forenoon 5 Dec 1808; 70 miles south-east of Roses Jahleel Brenton was encountering strong easterly gales and high seas, NA ADM 51/1950, Captain's Log, *Spartan*, 6 Dec 1808.

100 NA ADM 51/2462 Captain's Log, *Imperieuse*, afternoon 5 Dec 1808.

101 Cochrane, *Autobiography*, 305; NA ADM 51/2462 Captain's Log, *Imperieuse*, afternoon 4 Dec 1808.

102 Cochrane to Collingwood, 5 Dec 1808.

103 Author's observations at ruins of Trinity Castle prior to excavation, Dec 2004; see also plans of the castle in 1808 and 1814 in de la Fuente, *Fortificaciones*, figs 11.7 and 11.8.

104 Cochrane, *Autobiography*, 315; Gouvion Saint-Cyr, *Journal*, 54; Belmas, *Journaux*, 455; sundry entries in captain's logs for the *Imperieuse*, *Spartan* and *Amazon*, Dec 1808 to Nov 1809.

105 I am indebted to Captain Jock Alexander RN, DACOS Royal Navy Carrier Strike Force, and Captain Jeffrey B. Miller USN, United States Naval Attaché to London, for their views on littoral warfare past and present which informs this interpretation of events at Roses in 1808; discussion after Oxford Naval Symposium, St Anne's College, Oxford, 16 May 2009.

106 Collingwood to Mulgrave, *Ocean* at Malta, 21 Jan 1809, in Newnham Collingwood, *Correspondence*, 483.

107 From the tables of troop dispositions in Catalonia during 1808, in Belmas's '*Pièces Justificatives*'; Gouvion Saint-Cyr had 25,000 troops in his VIIth Corps, but 7,000 of these were across the border in Rousillon awaiting pay and provisions (C.D. Hall, *British Strategy in the Napoleonic War*, Manchester 1992, 115).

108 Collingwood to Radstock, *Ocean* in the way to Malta, 4 Jan 1809, in Newnham Collingwood, *Correspondence*, 479.

109 Lord Cochrane's addresses to the House of Commons, 19 Jul 1811 and 22 Feb 1812, recorded in Cobbett's *Parliamentary Records* vol. XX, 1093, and vol. XXI, 888–91.

110 Thomas, in *New Lights on the Peninsular War*, 51.

111 M. Llewellyn-Jones, 'Collingwood's Legacy 1: Salamanca 1812', paper given to *The Collingwood Years* conference 2008; these actions were previously discussed in more detail by Dr Llewellyn-Jones in a seminar with the Tutor and students of the University of Oxford International Programme course 'Hearts of Oak: the Royal Navy in the Age of Revolution 1776–1815', at the Naval Historical Branch, Portsmouth, 19 Jul 2007.

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