

Women and flags

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Abstract

In the human psyche, flags are usually associated with men. They are a masculine emblem, of virility, war and discovery. However these concepts not only forget that they represent the human family as a whole, men and women, but also the fundamental role that women played in their development: the role models, the seamstresses who created the flags, or the heroines who were actively engaged in these defining moments. In their own way, women have always been present in the great tales of civilisation. The political and social struggles of the twentieth century have only reinforced this, with flags associated with causes, movements and demonstrations. Many political systems have also used the female as a central symbol of propaganda, as the flag-bearer of an ideology. This paper aims to explore the feminine role in vexillology, not simply because this history also concerns ... men! Finally, the huge number of languages that assign the feminine gender to the word 'flag' gives us another excellent reason to explore these unresearched aspects of vexillology.

Foreword

For this 27th International Congress of Vexillology in London, faithful to the principles I have adopted and consistent with the thematic study of flags, after considering several subjects I finally proposed to talk about women and flags. My subject was submitted to the organisers of the Congress, who accepted it. It was only later that I was surprised to learn through an email from Professor Sekhar Chakrabarti that our Indian Bengali vexillology colleague had himself delivered a talk on this theme at ICV26 (Sydney, 2015). Unfortunately, as I had not attended the Sydney Congress I was completely unaware of this. However, I am acquainted with the intellectual and humane qualities of Professor C. and I know that he will see no problem if women return to fly above the flagpoles for a second time. My work will not duplicate his work, of which I know nothing. We belong to separate cultures and know that an identical theme can be handled by two specialists, each with his own personality and perceptions.

It is this very aspect of vexillology which brings its richness.

Introduction

We will begin by studying how women are represented on flags. Whether represented naturally, allegorically, or even in a more abstract way, the woman as concept and as symbol inspires flags as she has always inspired men.

We will then look at the woman as an activist in different fields: as a seamstress, as a manufacturer, but also as a designer or even as an activist in certain events.

In the nineteenth and especially the twentieth century, we discover the woman who controls her own life. I am thinking of the many activist groups and movements commonly referred to as feminist.

In the vast human scene, we also consider the woman as a specific entity within organised societies through examples from all kinds of institutions – from education to armies, without forgetting militias, governmental and non-governmental organisations.

We shall conclude with some mythological representations such as fairies, sirens and goddesses, before examining some more particular cases. We will then have an overall idea of what women and flags can teach us from the viewpoint of vexillology as well as those of sociology and human psychology.

The woman as inspiration

The woman, whether represented naturally or allegorically, has inspired many flags. Let us consider some examples.

In European or non-European Christian societies, the woman most represented was definitely the Blessed Virgin. As a symbol of protection she appeared on many flags, obviously religiously inspired, and also on military flags. Examples such as the flags of the German Catholic League in the seventeenth century or of Austrian regiments in the nineteenth century are testimony to her importance. Some countries impacted by the spread of Christianity also adopted the image of the Virgin Mary. The case of Mexico is interesting: after the conquest, Hernan Cortez adopted a *pennon* bearing the effigy of the Virgin Mary; three centuries later, she was drawn on the flags supporting independence, as seen on the *flags* of Father Hidalgo and the Virgin of Guadalupe. The Catholic tradition has adopted white and blue colours because these are the colours of the Virgin Mary. When observing old European flags bearing these two colours, we can surmise that they belong to this tradition (e.g. Portugal until 1911, Galicia, Bavaria), even if not all blue and white flags follow this symbolism.



Above left, German Catholic League, 17th Century; above right, Virgin of Guadalupe, Mexico, 19th Century; left, European Union, the Marian interpretation, 8 December 1955

As we know, Muslims do not tolerate the representation of human beings in their art and artefacts. That is why one official flag of Egypt appears particularly interesting. It is the flag of the Minya Governorate, which is green with a white centre, within which the head of Queen Nefertiti can be seen.



*El Minya Governorate, Egypt.
Image by Jaume Ollé, FOTW*

A woman is also represented on a little-known French flag, 'the flag of the Lady of Brassempouy', showing a woman's head on two white triangles on a red background. The flag was designed after the discovery in 1890 of a little ivory statue in the village of that name in south-west France. It is evidence that human beings were living there in Later Paleolithic times. That flag, intended to be symbolic, was proposed as the flag of Gascony.



*'The Lady of Brassempouy',
Brassempouy, Landes, France*

As an allegorical figure, the woman is present more frequently on flags. As a foster-mother, a mother-hen, a feeding-mother, a fruitful mother, sowing liberty and virtue, she is to be found all over the world.



*Luče, Slovenia. Image by Zeljko
Heimer, FOTW*

From the idea of the *protective mother country* stemmed the creation of the oblast of Volgograd. We must remember that Volgograd was the former name of Stalingrad, the site of a hard and decisive Second World War battle between Germany and the Soviet Union. 'The Call of the Mother Country', a memorial statue 279ft high, was unveiled in 1967. It represents a woman pointing a sword to the sky, her tunic floating behind her, resembling an angel ready to combat whoever would attack Russia or her children.



*Woman as the protective mother
country, Volgograd oblast, Russia*

The flag of the oblast, directly inspired by the mother-country allegory, was only adopted in the year 2000. It is a red 2:3 rectangle with the famous statue depicted in white in the middle. Two navy blue stripes at the hoist represent the Volga and the Don, the rivers that flow across the territory

A woman representing the idea of Liberty featured on the first flag of the state of Alabama between 1861 and 1865. The influence of a group of women from Montgomery might explain the presence of this goddess of Liberty on a navy blue background. The blonde-haired woman, dressed in red, holds a sword in her right hand, while with her left hand she waves a navy-blue flag edged with golden yellow bearing a star topped with the name *Alabama*, also in golden yellow. The words *Independence Now and Forever* are written in a semicircle above.



*Woman as the figure of Liberty,
Alabama (USA), 1861-95*

The allegory of virtue dictated the choice of the state of Virginia in its first flag of 1861. That flag consisted of a white disc on a navy-blue background on which is a woman dressed as a Greek, treading on a man dressed as a Roman. Virtue will always master tyranny, as expressed by the motto beneath her: *Sic Semper Tyrannis* ('Always Thus To Tyrants').



Woman as virtue, Virginia (USA), 1861

The same applies to the flag of New Jersey. On a buff-coloured background, the azure central coat of arms with three ploughs, a helmet and a horse's head above, is held by Liberty and by Ceres, goddess of agriculture, crops and fertility. A ribbon bears the words *Liberty and Prosperity*, with the year 1776, when independence was proclaimed.

These examples are just a few of a potentially longer list. The French Republic has interpreted this woman as 'Liberty Guiding the People'. Although she is depicted holding a tricoloured flag, she is nowhere to be seen on a flag, except in graphical form as an official logo of the country.

The woman as active participant in the adventure of flags

Far from being passive, women have always participated in the adventure of flags. For years they sewed the emblems held by men. Some women initiated the creation of flags, others became well known through various symbolic actions. As we are about to discover.

Without female hands, no flags!



Patria by Brazilian artist Pedro Bruno, 1919

These anonymous heroines of vexillology first came to prominence during modern revolutions.

In France, during the Revolutionary Wars in the Vendée, hundreds of women from all walks of life sewed flags from pieces of white cloth bearing Sacred Hearts and the inscription, 'Long Live The King'.

The Marquise de Bonchamps recalled in her memoirs: 'I made flags from my linen and from my dresses as I didn't have any material. I have never sewed and embroidered with so much fervour and pleasure.'

A few women became famous because they sewed the first flag of their country.

Philadelphia-born Betsy Ross grew up in a family of well-to-do textile merchants. In June 1776 rebel representatives may have come and asked her to create a design for the first flag using thirteen red-and-white stripes and a navy-blue square decorated with a circle of thirteen white stars.

On 4 July 1776 Independence Day was declared; on 4 June 1777 the design was chosen. It was the first version of the Stars and Stripes.



*Sewing the first flag:
Betsy Ross, USA, 1776*

In 1803 the slave rebellion in Haiti made it necessary to create a flag. It was to be a French tricolour but with the white stripe removed as it represented the monarchical system and French domination. A young woman, Catherine Flon, made the new blue and red flag. It was said that when she didn't have enough thread to sew it, she used her own hair.



*Sewing the first flag:
Catherine Flon, Haiti, 1803*

Back In Europe, political conflicts occurred between liberal and absolutist groups in Portugal in 1828-34. Portuguese history says that before it was raised on 8 July 1830, the first blue and white flag of the Liberals was embroidered by Queen Maria II herself. The victory of the Liberals ensured the triumph of their flag.

This anecdote shows that queens could also be seamstresses when the fancy took them.

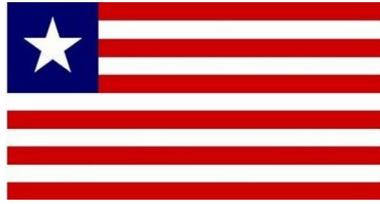
By the end of the nineteenth century, all Spanish possessions in Asia had been transferred to the USA.

In the Philippines, rebellious officers entrusted a young woman, Marcela Marino de Agoncillo, with the task of sewing the first national flag. She made it while in exile in Hong Kong in 1897. A few months later, on 18 May 1898, the victory of the rebels in Alapan ensured the triumph of the Philippine flag. These scenes have been immortalised in famous paintings completed after the events depicted in order to commemorate them for posterity.



*Sewing the first flag:
Marcela Agoncillo, Philippines, 1897;
detail from Fernando Amorsolo,
The Making of the Philippine Flag*

Women, individually or collectively, also created designs for flags that were later adopted formally. The Liberia flag was designed by a group of seven black American women, led by Susannah Elisabeth Lewis.



Susannah Lewis with her Liberian flag, 1847

In British India from 1904 onwards a national group for vexillology emerged on the initiative of Sister Nivedita. Although Anglo-Irish, she lived in India and had embraced the cause of her adopted homeland.

The flag was red with the word *Vajra* (weapon of the God Indra) in yellow. The Bengali motto *Vande Mataram* ('Hail Mother') was also in yellow. These two colours symbolised freedom and victory, whereas the Vajra represented strength.



Sister Nivedita with her Indian flag, 1904

In the early twentieth century some small groups were fighting against French policies in Algeria. Émilie Busquant, a communist activist and companion of nationalist politician Messali Hadj, may have designed the first pattern of the Algerian flag and used it during a demonstration on 4 July 1937. Its design and colours were almost identical to those of the flag chosen in 1962.



Émilie Busquant with her Algerian flag, 1937

In Africa, decolonisation led to Theodosiah Salomé Okoh, the creator of the Ghanaian flag, achieving fame in 1957. The flag was composed of three horizontal stripes – red, yellow and green – with a black star in the centre.



Theodosiah Okoh with her Ghanaian flag, 1957

Activist women were very courageous or we may say ... reckless, in distinguishing themselves by raising flags.

Returning to India, we should mention Bhikaji Cama. In August 1907 she went to Stuttgart for the International Socialist Congress. She belonged to an Indian delegation and her actions made her famous.

She held a flag based on a pattern and colours soon to be familiar to Indian nationalists. The pattern consisted of three horizontal stripes in green, orange and red. Each one was decorated with specific emblems.

More versions of this flag appeared: some with the colours inverted, others with orange, white and green instead. Later, this pattern was used as the basis of the flag chosen when Independence was gained forty years later.



Bhikaji Cama, India, 1907

In 1947, in the Moslem Punjab, soon to be part of Pakistan, a 14-year-old girl, Fatima Sughra, removed the Union Jack that decorated the office of the Civil Secretary of Lahore and replaced it with a green flag bearing the crescent and star of the Moslem League. This flag influenced Pakistan's choice of flag when it became independent.



Fatima Sughra, Pakistan, 1947

A vast number of examples exist of this type. On 2 March 2012 a young Tunisian girl dared to climb on the roof of the University of Manouba to remove the salafist flag flying there and replace it with the national flag.

It was a brave and symbolic action that took place on the eve of Worldwide Women's Day.

On 27 June 2015 a woman succeeded in climbing to the top of the flagpole in front of the statehouse of South Carolina (USA). This militant, Bree Newsome, a known political activist, had a goal. She wanted to remove a historical flag of the former secessionist Confederacy because she believed that it was symbolically unacceptable. She succeeded in removing it despite the presence of a police officer.

Then, on 23 March 2016, while a crowd was gathering in Brussels to pay homage to the victims of terrorist attacks that had occurred a few days earlier, an Arab woman got close to the altar where objects had been placed and seized an Israeli flag. She tore it and then replaced it on the altar with a Palestinian flag.

Modern female activism

We now move to another area of our presentation, modern female activism seen in all its aspects and its flags.



Maria Pineda (1804-31)



Pineda's 'Liberdad Igualdad Ley' flag

Mariana Pineda was a pioneer Spanish activist. This nineteenth-century personality, a free spirit for her time, designed a purple flag decorated with a green triangle and the slogan *Libertad, Igualdad, Ley* ('Liberty, Equality, Law').

She was accused of conspiracy and executed as an example. In 1936, her memory was appropriated by the Republic, which had also chosen the colour purple, the symbol of freedom.



Flag of the heroine of Liberty

In English-speaking countries, the Suffragist movement developed in the late nineteenth century. From 1902, a flag of 'protest' appeared in the USA, reproducing the national flag but with only four stars on the blue segment, one in each corner. These stars represented the four states where women had the right to vote. Later, the three colours of golden yellow, white and mauve became the symbol of the American Suffrage Movement. An older pattern of this flag can be seen in the National Museum of American History.



Badge in the colours of the American Suffrage Movement



Suffragist flag, National Museum of American History, Washington DC

The Suffragist movement was also growing ever more important in the UK. A Women's Suffrage Society formed in Wales created a flag with a variant of the Welsh emblem, including the words *Cardiff and District* and the initials *WWS* in red.

Protests from feminist activists reached the most isolated places.

Bermuda's patriarchal society was disturbed by activist Gladys Morrell. During the First World War she served at the front in Verdun, treating the wounded, and she then led a campaign of civil disobedience forcing Parliament to recognise the vote for women in 1944.

A flag composed of three equal and horizontal, red, white and blue stripes was the symbol of this political fight. The white stripe bore the motto *Votes for women* in black letters. The colours of this flag were the same as those of the British flag, but the design of the three stripes underlined the idea of equality.



Gladys Morell's Bermuda flag

During the First World War men were serving at the front, so women became increasingly aware of their role in society.

In the twentieth century, the demands of feminist activists grew throughout the world. It is impossible to draw up a complete list of flags. Nevertheless some remarks can be noted. Many flags use the same colours, with evocative patterns and mottos. All shades of purplish-blue often feature: for example, in the west, on the flags of Women's Marches Worldwide; in Canada, on flags highlighting violence committed against women; in Brazil, on flags used for demonstrations. Other examples include Kurdish women's organisations and the flags of the Thai princesses.



Betty Ford, wife of US President Gerald Ford, shows off the 'First Lady bloomers flag' with the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment), 24 June 1975.

<http://ourpresidents.tumblr.com/post/90455166679/first-lady-flags-after-noticing-the-national>

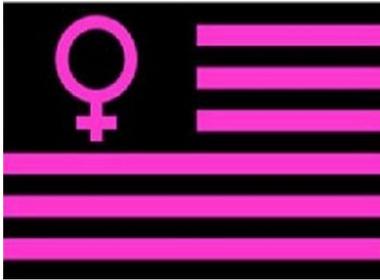


Raising a flag to end violence against women, Barrie, Ontario, Canada, 25 November 2016.

<http://www.barrietoday.com/local-news/raising-a-flag-to-end-violence-against-women-473995>

The basic patterns, with stripes of equal breadth, testify to a concern for equality. Sometimes mauve or pink are combined with black to convey a refusal to accept the status quo and the wish to see it change. This is the case for anarcho-feminists. The emblem of Venus is used repeatedly. It is sometimes complemented with a raised fist, alongside other emblems of an ideological nature, such as the red star used by the Kurdish associations or the All-India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA). The prominent graphics of the designs and mottos give an impression of collective power demanding that

rights be recognised by society as a whole.



Anarcho-feminist flag, USA



*Tibetan Women's Association,
Dharamsala, India*



*All-India Democratic
Women's Association*



All-Nepal Women's Association

International flags are numerous, as are national ones. The blue flag of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, bearing a symbol of Venus surrounded by olive branches and the acronym *INSTRAW*; the three vertical stripes of red, white and red with the same symbol of Venus imitating the earth and the motto *International Women's Day*; the red field with the motto *Equal Pay for Equal Work* - all have impact internationally.



*Above, UN International Research and
Training Institute for the Advancement
of Women; below, Women's Day flag*



*Above, Women's Day flag;
below, 'Equal pay for equal work'*



In contrast, emblems such as the red flag of the German association Politik mit Frauen, the blue flag with traditional designs of Kachin women in Thailand, the green flag bearing figures representing the women farmers of the Coordinadora Nacional de Organizaciones de Mujeres Trabajadora Rurales e Indígenas (CONAMURI) in Paraguay show that even where common claims exist, each society has its own concerns and objectives.



Above left, Politik mit Frauen, Germany; above right, Kachin Women's Association, Thailand; left, CONAMURI (Cordinadora nacional de organizaciones de mujeres trabajadores indigenas), Paraguay

Claims can take unexpected turns, conveying specific aspects of female psychology.

In Tunisia, 13 August marks Women's Day, first instituted in 1956 by then President Bourguiba. The Jasmine Revolution of 2010-11 gave special meaning to this demonstration. Women march as a reminder that there is still a lot to do to improve their condition. They express their mistrust of conservatives and have a platform for protest since freedom has now been restored.

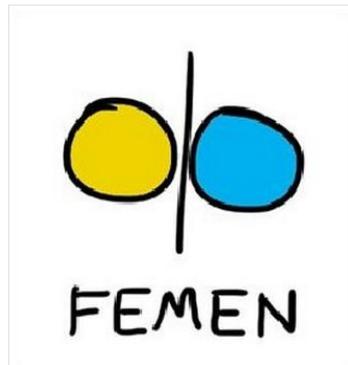
On 13 August 2013 thousands of women, of all ages, marched in Tunis, all wearing national flags that had been made into dresses. For this event, an evocative flag was created.



Left, Tunisia, 13 August 2013; right, Women's smiley flag by Khalid Albaih.
http://www.huffpostmaghreb.com/2013/08/13/13-aout-2013-journee-de-l_n_3744562.html

In European societies we are very familiar with the Femen phenomenon. Small groups often demonstrate with the Cyrillic initial 'Ф' or with 'f' on their flag. The design evokes breasts or buttocks, but this corporeal expression is much

debated because it often has no link with the underlying aim of the flag. But in the words of the Feminist Flag Corps, 'a woman's body is hers and hers alone'.



*Femen flag with the Cyrillic f or Ф, in Ukrainian colours.
http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/deed.en_CA*

As examples of the way the flag designs of the radical movement evoke this subject, we can quote the famous *Don't tread on me* on a pink background, or the design of female genitalia in red entwined with a green snake. A warning from the Bible, all in all!



*Three flags of the
Feminist Flag Corps*

We will conclude this section by discussing the actions of Melina Balbuena. This Argentinian woman was very well known in her country. On 25 November 2012, a day when violence against women is denounced, she exposed herself in front of the Monumento a la Bandera in Rosario. She was stark naked except for a national flag around her neck.

There was a general outcry, but Melina Balbuena explained the time had come 'to stop punishing women', adding that she felt indignant that a single woman was not allowed to be naked in public places. She said her goal was to 'make people think about violence committed against women'... very well, then.



Melina Balbuena, Monumento a la Bandera, Rosario, Argentina, 25 November 2012.
<http://www.infobae.com/2012/11/29/683923-un-desnudo-el-monumento-la-bandera-genero-polemica-rosario>

Indeed, to assert their claims women use means that seem to be ... unfathomable!

The woman as social entity

This section presents the woman as a moral entity in society: in state institutions, armies, militias and government associations.

Women can also be queens or princesses. In this case, as representatives of monarchical institutions, they have particular flags.

Two very different states like the United Kingdom or Thailand are examples of this reality.

However, the paradox is that when a person reaches the pinnacle of power, the individual no longer exists because she embodies the institution. These women must conform to the flags representing them!



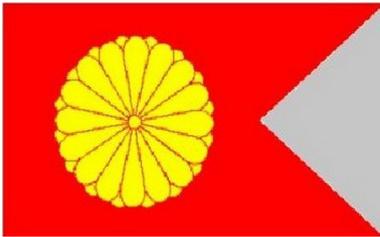
UK, Queen Elizabeth II: left, head of state. Image, Martin Grieve, FOTW; right, personal flag. Image, Manuela Schmöger/Graham Bartram, FOTW



Netherlands: Princess Máxima. Image, Mark Sensen, FOTW



Denmark: Queen Margrethe II. Image, Klaus-Michael Schneider, FOTW



*Japan: Empress.
Image, Kazutaka Nishiura, FOTW*



*Thailand: Queen Mother Sirikit,
widow of King Bhumibol Adulyadej*

In this rigorous world of vexillology, we have discovered one intruder.

In the Netherlands in 2003, when a daughter, Catharina-Amalia, was born to King Willem-Alexander and his wife Maxima, a contest was organised in Dutch schools to create a 'birth flag'.

The winner, 11-year-old Sanne van Duren, of Beemden school, Boxtel, Noord-Brabant, created a flag with Dutch and Argentine stripes (Argentina is Maxima's birthplace); it also has a vertical white strip with a crowned stork in the middle.

The young heir can display this flag before using the official coat of arms in 2021, when she will be 18 years old.



*Left, Princess Catharina-Amalia of the Netherlands, born 7 December 2003;
right, Sanne van Duren with her winning design at the Dokkummer
Vlaggencentrale factory. [http://www.brabantscentrum.nl/
oud_archief_2003/nieuws/0350_sanne.htm](http://www.brabantscentrum.nl/oud_archief_2003/nieuws/0350_sanne.htm)*

National armies also have feminine sections with specific flags.

Revived in difficult conditions in the early twentieth century, in 1928 Poland opened its defence organisations to women and girls over the age of 15 in the paramilitary training unit Przysposobienie Wojskowe Kobiet (Women's Military Training Unit).

Its flag consisted of a white and red square with the traditional emblem of the eagle in the middle, within a disc. In the lower part of the disc was a black triangle with a golden yellow rim and the letters *PWK* in the same colour.



*Przynsposobienie wojskowe Kobiet,
Poland, 1928*

In Asia, we find the flags of Japan's National Women's Defence Association (1930-45), of South Vietnam's Women's Armed Forces Corps (1969-75), and the Femi Girls' Cadet College, Bangladesh.



*Women's Association of the Japanese
National Defence, 1930-45*

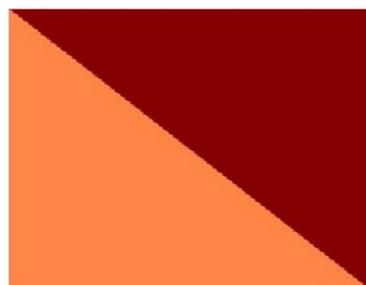


*Women's Armed Forces Corps,
South Vietnam, 1969-75*

In the Middle East, the Israeli army had its Heyl Nashim (Women's Corps), with a diagonal red and orange flag.



*Femi Girls' Cadet College,
Bangladesh*



*Heyl Nashim (Feminine Corps),
Israel, pre-2001*

Totalitarian societies have given a natural place to women's sections, aiming to promote the feminine model prescribed by the criteria of their particular political system.

The Third Reich provides a example in the flags of the NS-Frauenschaft (National Socialist Women's Organisation) based on colours of red, black and white.



Third Reich: left, NS-Frauenchaften (National Socialist Women's Organisation); right, Frauenarbeitsdienst (Women's Labour Service)

Communist countries did likewise, and we can cite the examples of the Socialist Women's Union of [North] Korea or the Organização da Mulher Angolana (Angolan Women's Organisation). All their flags are representative of the official ideology with specific colours, emblems or slogans.



[North] Korean Socialist Women's Organisation



Organização da Mulher Angolana (Angolan Women's Organisation)

Some countries attribute flags to the ministries responsible for women's issues – e.g. the Dominican Republic, whose Ministerio de la Mujer (Ministry for Women) has a mauve and purple flag with the symbol of Venus. Nor is this list exhaustive. We could find many more instances of feminine emblems.

Feminine myths on flags

Fairies, mermaids, goddesses ... in mythology, the problem is knowing if we're still talking about real women! Ireland has inherited Celtic legends, and the traditional 'woman-fairy-harp' in golden yellow is present on many of its historical flags. Mermaids also feature in legends. In Poland, for example, a mermaid from the Baltic Sea swam up the river Vistula before stopping on the site of modern Warsaw. Armed with a shield, the protective mermaid has become the emblem of the Polish capital. She is present on the city flag with two stripes, yellow and red.



Irish 'woman-fairy' harp



The Warsaw mermaid

Goddesses were plentiful in antique mythologies and many centuries later are still physically represented, especially on present-day Greek city flags.

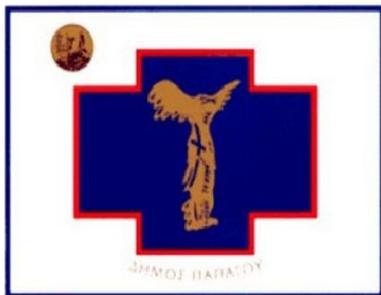


Goddess Fortuna on the flag of Glückstadt, Schleswig-Holstein



Goddess Athena flag, Greece

The blue flag of Athens depicts its founding goddess, Athena; Artemis, the goddess of hunting, is present on the flags of the Attican cities of Artemida and Marousi; Nike, the personification of victory, has been adopted for the city of Papagou.



Flag depicting the goddess Nike, Papagou, Greece



Flag depicting the goddess Artemis, Artemida, Greece

Some religions or philosophies also celebrate goddesses on flags.

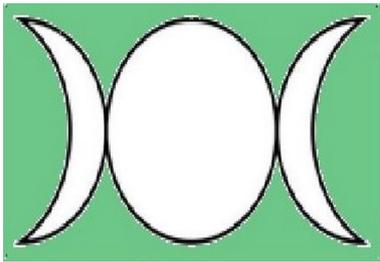
The feast of Navaratri ('nine nights'), celebrating the goddesses of the Hindu pantheon during nine days and nine nights, hoists one of the most remarkable flags: golden yellow with nine rays – white, yellow, brown, blue, green, purple, orange, black and pink – emerging from the figure of a goddess.



Navarati Feast flag, India, depicting the goddess and nine emerging rays



Representation of a goddess on a paganist flag



Another representation of a goddess on a paganist flag

We have not yet mentioned feminist flags linked with sexual orientation.

Among the multitude of existing flags, we can note that feminine ones are generally purple or pink. For men, the colour blue is the most important. The transgender flag has five stripes: blue, pink, white, pink and blue. Another feminine flag for 'gender vague' is pink with two purple narrow stripes.



Gender vague



Transgender

Before concluding, just a touch of humour.

In Washington State (USA), the Jodie Foster Atheist Lesbian Commune has a flag: two stripes, pale blue and pale green with a yellow sun (like a smiley), surrounded by a navy-blue symbol of Venus.



Jodie Foster Atheist Lesbian Commune, Washington State, USA

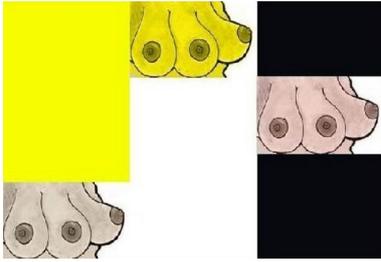


Other World Kingdom of Patricia I, Cerná, Czech Republic

In the old castle of Černá, in the southern Czech Republic, was another community, the Other World Kingdom, ruled from 1996 by the self-styled Queen Patricia I.

To identify this rather unusual enclave, based on sadomasochism and male sexual slavery, a flag was necessary: a blue and red saltire with the black symbol of Venus on a white shield.

Women at the service of publicity are also very present on flags.



'Trimamoland'



Beer festival flag



The new triskell: Isle of Woman



*Preparing for battle,
the flag of the new Amazons*

A last amusing detail: in the US state of Virginia, there still exists an old law that has never been repealed: a woman has the right to drive a car but ... only if her husband precedes her in his own car waving a red flag to warn other drivers!

Conclusion

The topic of women and flags is both vast and complex, so my paper is very incomplete. Flags have many stories to tell of women!