



FLAG INSTITUTE

FLAG MASTER 166



Flag for 'invisible' Kven people

Sark flag approved

Martinique adopts separatists' flag

CONTRIBUTERS



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FM'S COVER



Kven people show their flag during the Arctic Race of Norway 2018. Photo Gyrid Øyen

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MASTHEAD

Flagmaster

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The Flag Institute

Founded by Dr William G. Crampton in April 1971, the Flag Institute is a UK charity (CIO 1152496) working to document, celebrate and promote flags in all their variety. Independent, inclusive and informed, the Flag Institute shares knowledge, opinion and ideas in person, in print and online. It publishes a twice-yearly, 48-page, full-colour journal *Flagmaster*; organises twice-yearly international conferences at different UK venues; runs the William Crampton Library, one of the world's leading flag research and documentation centres; and offers a unique free source of advice, information and guidance.

In the absence of a UK Flag Act, the Flag Institute forms the de facto authority on flags flown in the UK, its Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories, serving as adviser to the UK Government and UK Parliament. It promotes the creation and adoption of new community flags and maintains the UK Flag Registry as the official record of designs.

The Flag Institute is also proudly international in scope and outlook, with members from all six continents. It is a full member of the International Federation of Vexillological Associations (FIAV) and the three-time host of the biennial International Congress of Vexillology (ICV), most recently in London in 2017.

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Graphic Design - Theun Okkerse FF  The Superfluus Flag



Happy and Glorious

I'm writing this shortly after two momentous events in the life of our nation. The Coronation of King Charles III was a spectacular, significant and profound occasion for all of us whether monarchist or not as a new era begins. The country bedecked with flags and most of them the right way up! It seems our people have generally got the message about how to fly our flag, but they have not yet understood how to hang it vertically.

Hanging flags vertically is fraught with Pooh Traps as we all know and, where symmetry is lacking, it behoves us to educate our respective nations worldwide how it is done correctly. Where I live it was entirely random whether vertical flags were right or wrong. I'm not really complaining because it was a delight to see so many flags adorning places where they are never usually seen, but we can do better. The Institute's particular contribution to the Coronation was of course in the person of March Herald Extraordinary resplendent in his tabard. Philip Tibbetts did us proud.

And just a week later Liverpool burst into the limelight with a wonderful display of flags from all over Europe and indeed the world. Geography lessons will never be the same with Australia doing well in Eurovision - come on New Zealand and Canada. People have mixed feelings about the exotic performances at Eurovision, but to see so many nationalities in a joyous and friendly gathering with their flags flying in harmony together is a lesson to politicians worldwide. In addition, the Blue and Gold of Ukraine ably demonstrated our strong support for those brave people in their time of greatest need.

Now the bunting has come down, but I hope there will be some lasting effects from recent celebrations. Let's keep some of those flags flying and maintain the friendships with other nations. Let us retain the pride in what we do so well and allow some of the fairy dust to settle on other aspects of national and international life where it is badly needed.

Meanwhile wherever you are I hope you enjoy a fine summer (or indeed a calm winter).

Malcolm Farrow OBE FF FFI
President Flag Institute

1912 banner will become official 'historic' flag of the Beehive State

Utah swaps a non-distinctive blue flag for a striking design

Malcolm Good

Utah, the Beehive State, has created a striking new flag to replace its present hard-to-recognise flag that displays the State Seal against a blue field. The Utah Legislature voted on the 2 March 2023 to adopt the new flag, although that legislation will not take effect until the 9 March 2024.¹



1. The state flag of Utah, effective from March 2024.

The design for the new state flag is specified in legislative bill S.B.31, State Flag Amendments, which provides an explanation of the symbolism used.²

At the centre of the flag is a beehive for industry and community. The beehive also represents the year 1847, when the first Mormon pioneers led by Brigham Young settled in Utah. The beehive, or more specifically a skep, is a traditional emblem of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and an early Utah state symbol. While Mormons are the predominant religious group in Utah, it is noteworthy that the next largest group are those who have no religious affiliation and, thus, it is contended that the beehive is increasingly seen as a secular symbol of Utah.³

The gold trim around the beehive is a nod to the gold circle which contains the state seal in the present state flag and is also thought of as the colour of prosperity. The hexagon is seen as a metaphor for strength and provides further bee imagery through its honeycomb shape.

The star beneath the beehive is for hope and represents 1896, the year that Utah became the 45th state of the United States of America. The star was designed initially with eight points to represent the Federally-recognised tribal nations of Utah. However, the eight-pointed star was indistinct when viewed from a distance and it was felt that it excluded other groups who did not have Federal recognition. Thus, the star was altered to a traditional five-pointed star.

Utah's tribal nations are though represented via the five peaks of the white mid-section of the flag, which is for the five main indigenous groups. These peaks are also for the mountains of Utah and the inverted peak that follows the bottom of the hexagon is for the state's canyons. In addition, white represents peace. The top blue section of the flag symbolises the sky and faith, it also provides continuity with the blue field of the present flag. The bottom red section is for the state's landscape, in particular the red rocks of southern Utah.



The new flag represents mountains similar to those rising behind the Great Salt Lake. Photo Dr. Dwayne Meadows, NMFS/OPR. - NOAA Wikimedia Commons

This design leans heavily on the 2021 commemorative flag, which was created to mark the 125th anniversary of Utah's entering the Union. Utah is the only state to have such a flag and it is contended that the commemorative flag paved the way for the introduction of a new state flag by demonstrating that Utah's identity could be retained within a simplified flag design.⁴ (Illustration 2)



2. The Utah commemorative flag, created in 2021.

That said, there were 70 people whose ideas were thought to inspire the new flag and, therefore, each of those individuals took a share of the \$5,000 prize money which the legislature allocated to present to the person who submitted the winning design.⁵

It is reckoned that close to sixty percent of the designs received included a beehive motif and, of the final twenty that were selected for further consideration, nine included a beehive and eight a representation of mountains. Once these twenty options had been selected, further public feedback was taken from which a recommendation was made to the state legislative bodies.⁶ (Illustration 3)

While a new state flag is agreed, the soon-to-be 'old' flag will remain in the public eye as it is to be designated the 'historic' flag of Utah. The historic flag is to be flown from the capitol in Salt Lake City at all times and from all state buildings on state holidays and other special occasions. Those special occasions

however are not defined. In addition, the historic flag is to take precedence over the new state flag when flown on the same flagpole.

This retention of the present flag is a compromise position due to the strong feelings expressed about changing the flag. Those in favour of change promoted the view that a more distinct flag was called for, rather than one which follows the same pattern as many other state flags by placing the state seal against a

dark blue field. Also, that it is difficult to draw or replicate, not easy to distinguish when limp on a flagpole, and that a new design could better represent the shared values of those living in Utah. Thus, the aim was to create a state flag which could be recognised easily and that people would be proud to display.⁷

Others argued that changing the flag would remove a part of the history of Utah, the present flag having been in place since the early twentieth century. This was the biggest hurdle faced by the task force set up to evaluate options for a new flag - that the proposals were an attack on history and specifically the history of Utah. There was a need to explain that was not the intention and the desired outcome was state wide pride in a new flag.⁸ Despite those efforts, some Utahns hoped to gain enough support to force a referendum on whether or not to repeal the flag legislation. However, their efforts fell well short, as they gained only about 14,000 signatures from the 130,000 required to petition for a referendum.⁹

In addition, a survey showed a majority of people who expressed an opinion being in favour of the new flag (48% in favour versus 35% against, with 17% don't know). That majority could though be eroded somewhat if the polling margin of error of 4.5% is factored in.¹⁰

The task force was set-up in 2021 and consisted of the State Governor, Spencer Cox, and Lieutenant Governor, Deirdre Henderson, plus three representatives from each of the State Senate and House along with the Executive Director of the Department of Heritage and Arts, Jill Remington



3. The 20 designs short listed for further consideration.

Love." This task force received close to six thousand submissions which were narrowed down to twenty options in September 2022. Those designs were opened up for comment over the following month, during which approximately 44,000 responses were received. From that, in November 2022, a proposed design moved through the state committees and legislature before being signed into law by Governor Cox.

This though is not first time in recent years that Utah has considered changing its flag. The newspaper, *Salt Lake Tribune* in co-operation with the *North American Vexillological Association* (NAVA) ran a competition to replace the flag in 2002. That was prompted by a survey which rated the design of the Utah flag a lowly 58th out of the 72 US and Canadian state, province, and territory flags. The same rationale for change was given then as today - the flag is overly complex, not distinctive, and not representative of all Utahns. Similarly, like now, the submitted designs tended to

Notes

1. Utah State Legislature, "More than a flag" <https://flag.utah.gov/>
2. Utah State Legislature, S.B.31 "State Flag Amendments" <https://le.utah.gov/~2023/bills/static/SB0031.html>
3. Pew Research Center, "Adults in Utah" <https://www.pewresearch.org/religious-landscape-study/state/utah/>
4. Flagged for Content, episode 23, "The Newtah Flag, with Erik Nystul" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzD7PgFYcOM>
5. Deseret News, "Artists behind Utah's new state flag split \$5,000 prize money" <https://www.deseret.com/utah/2023/2/7/23590098/new-state-flag-utah-artists-split-5000-prize-money>

6. Deseret News, "Does one of these flags say 'Utah' to you? Lawmaker teases flag finalist 'sneak peak', <https://www.deseret.com/utah/2022/9/8/23343062/utah-new-state-flag-sneak-peek-top-designs-task-force>
7. HITC, "Why did Utah change their flag as state unveils simplified design?" <https://www.hitc.com/en-gb/2023/03/22/why-did-utah-change-their-flag-as-state-unveils-simplified-design/>
8. Flagged for Content, episode 23, "The Newtah Flah, with Erik Nystul" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzD7PgFYcOM>
9. Standard-Examiner, "Utah flag question-petitioners lack signatures, but say they are coming" <https://www.standard.net/news/government/2023/mar/27/utah-flag-question-petitioners-lack-signatures-but-say-theyre-coming/> and KSL New radion, "Ahead of final deadline on Thursday, state flag referendum falls short" <https://kslnnewsradio.com/1999399/r-eferendum-opposing-new-state-flag-falls-thousands-of-votes-short>
10. Deseret News, "Poll, More Utahns support support the new state flag trhan oppose it" <https://www.deseret.com/utah/2023/4/5/23664806/utah-flag-new-design-public-opinion-poll>
11. Deseret News, "Don't like the look of state flag? Lawmakers OK task force for redesign" <https://www.deseret.com/utah/2021/3/4/22313867/legislature-oks-possible-state-flag-redesign-by-setting-up-a-flag-task-force-governor>
12. NAVA News, vol 35, no 2, April - June 2002, issue 174, page 6, "A new flag for Utah?" <http://www.vexman.net/nnpdf/NN174.pdf>
13. KUER local news, "Legislature: Fixing the Flag" <https://web.archive.org/web/20110724023613/http://www.publicbroadcasting.net/kuer/news.newsmain/article/1/0/1764080/KUER.Local.News/Legislature.Fixing.the.Flag>
14. Utah State Legislature, "Utah State Flag Concurrent Resolution" <https://le.utah.gov/~2011/bills/hbillint/hc002.htm>

highlight the beehive within a simplified version of the present flag. However, a campaign to retain the present flag, particularly by the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, and a change in ownership of the *Salt Lake Tribune* ended any attempt to change the flag at that time.¹²

The soon to be designated 'historic' flag was adopted in 2011 but has remained more or less unaltered since 1912. The

adaptation in 2011 was to correct a mistake which saw the year 1847 placed above the year 1896, rather than on the shield of the state seal.

This stemmed from an error made by a flag maker in 1922 which was replicated and became part of future flags.¹³ (Illustration 4)



4. The present and soon to be designated 'historic' flag of Utah.

That error was made against the flag of 1912, which was a colour representation of the previous flag with the addition of a gold ring around the state seal. It was created to be presented to the newly commissioned United States Ship *Utah*. The previous version, which rendered the state seal in white or silver against a blue background, was designed in 1903 to represent Utah at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition (St Louis World's fair). Originally, this flag was viewed solely as the Governor's flag until a resolution of March 1911 made it the first official state flag of Utah.¹⁴ □

Philip Tibbetts FFI FF
Communities Vexillologist, The Flag Institute
Honorary Vexillologist at the Court of the Lord Lyon

I cannot believe that it is Flagmaster column-time again. My vexillological world feels like it has been running on fast-forward! Some of this is the world of flags fully getting back into its stride and some of this are 'over and above' events. A good breeze is of course great for flags, but you can have too much of a good thing and there are times over the last few months that feel like that breeze has become a perfect storm!

This is not a complaint, more a recognition of how our field is growing vigorously again even if it can be hard work at times. Aberdeenshire has unveiled its flag, Banffshire and Moray competitions are underway and Berwickshire's has been announced.

Of course, most recently there have been my duties around the Coronation, where it was great to see flags play such a role in the Abbey itself. From the displays of flags around the country, to the use of national flags in the King's procession into the abbey and of course the very uniform that I am

privileged to wear. However, the most interesting thing I have found over the last year is not so much the effect this wealth of activity has had on me, but the effect it has had on some of those most dear to me.

Since I last wrote here, my 5-year-old daughter has added to her repertoire of role-playing games. In addition to the usual 'Doctors and Nurses' and 'Cops and Robbers' she likes to play she had added 'Flag Ceremonies'; in which she will pretend to play the bagpipes, march around, sing a song and raise a flag!

As it happened last year was the 350th anniversary of the Lyon Court's registry and the closing ceremony was celebrated with a service at St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh preceded with a display of personal banner flags. As I was on duty as an officer of arms, I was able to ask my daughter if she wanted to play a 'real' flag ceremony.

She duly volunteered to carry my personal banner for me. But little did I realise that the

organisers from the Heraldry Society of Scotland put her at the head of the parade. Mirroring my responsibilities in the parades of last September. She was over the moon, and so was I.

It meant so much to me to see how my flag and ceremonial work was inspiring so much pride in my daughter - as abnormal as this experience might be for most 5-year-olds! But further, it is a sign of how she has come to see symbolism as a source of joy and fun, which is something the Flag Institute strives so much for within our community.

In my last column I concluded about the power that flags bring to communities in difficult times as well as good. That said it is nonetheless wonderful to see flags used at their most positive. And I have been lucky enough to see this at both a personal level through my daughter and at a national level owing to my duties at the Coronation. □

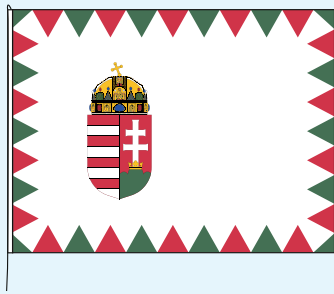




Code Flag over H ‘Heave to, I have something important to communicate’

Contributions from Jan Oskar Engene, Andrew Kayley, Jos Poels and Ian Sumner

Hungary (1) Unsurprisingly land-locked Hungary does not have a Navy. The Hungarian Armed Forces’ 1st Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Warship and River Flotilla Regiment operates five river minesweeper vessels that patrol the 417 kilometres (259 miles) of the River Danube that traverses Hungary.



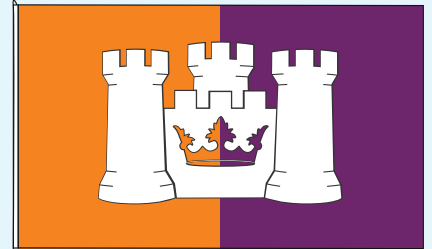
The design of the war ensign is included in the 13 August 2021 decree (15/2011, (VIII.11)), from the Ministry of the Interior on military symbols associated with the Hungarian Armed Forces. (AK)

Aberdeenshire (2) After a public competition, a new flag has been chosen for the Scottish county of Aberdeenshire. The new flag proclaims the unique identity of this historic Scottish county. Its field of gold and purple evokes Aberdeenshire’s characteristic crops, landscape and produce. Gold (PMS 1375) recalls ripe barley and the whisky produced from it, while purple (PMS 260) symbolises the heather-covered mountains.

The white castle bearing a crown in gold and purple has a dual meaning. It represents Aberdeenshire’s many castles – the county is known as ‘Scotland’s Castle Country’. But in conjunction with the crown, it also represents more specifically the royal residence of Balmoral.

The winning designers were five students from local primary schools. Meryn Wilson, Eliana Irwin, Zara Sim

and Iris Main, from Newtonhill Primary School, near Stonehaven, devised the colours and layout. However, the judges



added a vital finishing touch from the entry of Tristan Davidson, from Elrick Primary School in Westhill. His flag also had a castle in the centre, but he had added the crown to represent the area’s royal links.

The unveiling, attended by the Flag Institute’s Communities Vexillologist Philip Tibbetts and the Lord Lieutenant of Aberdeenshire, Sandy Manson, took place at a ceremony at Castle Fraser on Saturday 22 April 2023. The flag has also been registered with Lord Lyon King of Arms to conform with the law in Scotland.

Two other counties in north-east Scotland, Moray and Banffshire, have been inspired by their neighbour to introduce a flag of their own, and competitions for both are now underway. (IS)

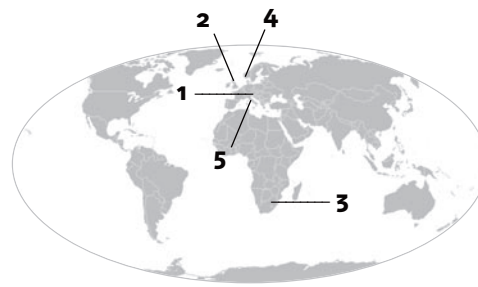
South Africa (3) Following a decision by the South African Supreme Court on 21 April 2023, it has been decided that the ‘gratuitous’ public display of the old, apartheid-era, Union of South Africa flag amounts to



hate speech and racial discrimination and leaves the flag-hoister open to prosecution. But the Court did not rule on the legality of displaying the flag within a private

house. The Supreme Court upheld an original decision by the Equality Court in 2019.

Afriforum, a lobby group representing the interests



of the white Afrikaans population argued that such a 'wide-reaching' ban infringed the right of freedom of expression. Arguing in favour of the ban, the South African Human Rights Commission referred to the case of Dylann Roof, the US citizen convicted in 2015 of killing nine black people in Charleston, South Carolina. Roof was photographed wearing a jacket with the old Union flag alongside the old Rhodesian flag, thus 'demonstrating the clear connection' between the flag and violent white supremacists.

The Court acknowledged that the issue of the flag was a highly charged issue within the country, but decided that, for many, the flag was 'an overt symbol of the institutionalized racism and brutality of the apartheid regime' with similar connotations to the swastika flag of Nazi Germany, and 'those who publicly hold up or wave the old flag convey a brazen, destructive message that they celebrate and long for the racism of our past.' (IS)

Forest Finns (4) Originating in Finland in the 16th century, the Forest Finns migrated to Sweden then



further westwards to Norway. Now, linguistically assimilated into Swedish and Norwegian society, the group has been officially recognized as a

national minority in Norway and forming part of the larger group of Sweden Finns in Sweden, a need was felt for a unifying symbol of solidarity and common origin. Thus, eleven organizations on both sides of the border agreed, after a competition won by the couple Frédéric Lindboe and Bettina Gullhagen, on a flag for the Forest Finns, wherever they live.

The flag has a green field (PMS 7740) for the forests

in which the ancestors practiced their slash-and-burn agriculture, with yellow (PMS 122) for the rye they grew in the ashes. Red (PMS 7621) is for fire and the rowan tree. Black (PMS Process Black) stands for the soot of the burnt forest and for the sooty walls of the traditional houses with open fires. The lozenge is a symbol of fertility.

Announced 29 December 2022, the design and colour specifications were determined in April 2023, in time for a symbolic hoisting of the flag outside Oslo city hall on 4 April, marking the bicentenary of the first political manifestation of the Forest Finns. (JOE)

Vatican City (5) A new version of the Constitution of the Vatican City State was promulgated on 7 June 2023, replacing the one issued in 2000. The fundamental law includes a description and drawings of the Vatican flag, coat of arms and seal - all of which remain largely unchanged.

Appendices to the new law include drawings of all three symbols, but do not give any construction details, nor precise colour specifications for the flag.

From the illustration, it would appear that shading has been added to both keys. The colour of one key and the tiara are now yellow, rather than gold.



Unlike the Pope's coat of arms, the symbols of the independent Vatican City State feature a tiara, a symbol of temporal rule. In 2005, Pope Benedict XVI removed the three-tiered tiara from his coat of arms.

He replaced it with a mitre, a symbol of his episcopal ministry, and Francis has maintained this practice.

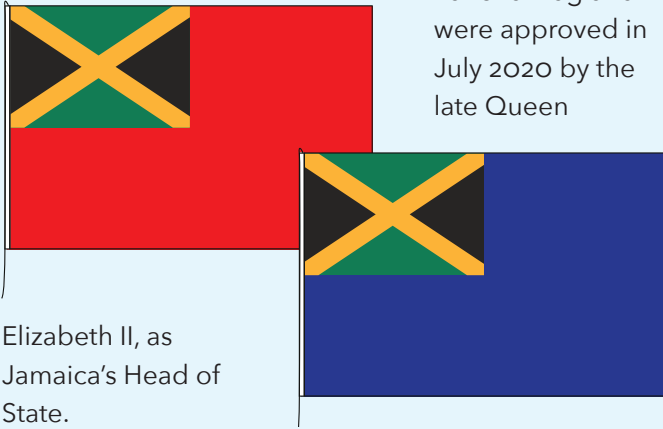
Code Flag over H



Although Staint Paul VI was the last pope to be crowned, it was not until 1996 - with the constitution *Universi Dominici Gregis* on the vacancy of the papacy and the election of a new pope - that Staint John Paul II officially replaced the coronation ceremony with a Mass for the inauguration of the pontificate. (IS)

Jamaica (6) The island state of Jamaica in the Caribbean has introduced two new ensigns for use by ships and yachts. Both ensigns incorporate the

national flag and were approved in July 2020 by the late Queen



Elizabeth II, as Jamaica's Head of State.

The new red ensign, for use by yachts registered in Jamaica, has the Jamaican national flag in the top left corner. The Maritime Authority of Jamaica applied for this red ensign because it wants to profile itself as home for large yachts. The ensign is similar to that of the nearby Cayman Islands, where many mega yachts are registered and has prestige among superyacht owners.

The first red ensign was presented to the master of the yacht Doña Lola on 8 April 2022. The second new ensign is blue with the Jamaica national flag in the canton and is to be flown by state-owned vessels. However Jamaican Coast Guard vessels fly a white ensign with a red St George cross with the Jamaican flag in the top left corner. With the introduction of the new ensigns Jamaica follows the British tradition whereby ships can be recognized by the colour of their ensign. A British red

ensign is used by civil vessels and a blue ensign, often defaced with a badge or emblem, is used by UK government departments or public bodies. (JP)

Kedah (7) Two Malaysian states, Kedah and Perak, were mixed up in the previous *Flagmaster* (165) on these Code

Flag over H (pages 11 and 12). It was the state flag of Kedah whose specifications were revised



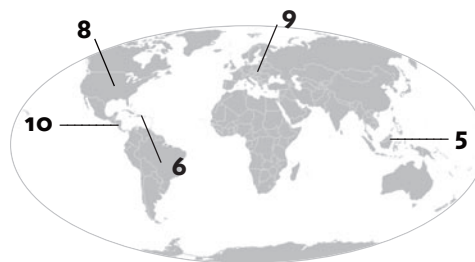
and published in the official state gazette *Warta Karajaan*, not the state flag of Perak, which is a triband white, yellow and black. (JP)

United States (8) The US Department of Defence has ordered that Army National Guard units who can trace their lineage back to units that once served as part of the Confederate Army must remove the Civil War campaign streamers from their unit colours.

In 2020, in the wake of the George Floyd protests, the US Congress appointed a commission to examine names and traditions amongst the armed forces that commemorated service with the Confederacy, and to recommend any necessary changes. Those changes involve renaming some bases and some US Navy

ships, as well as the streamers. In the US Armed Forces,





participation in Federal service during any campaign is marked by a coloured streamer attached to the finial of the unit colours. In 1948, a Congressional resolution authorised Army units to carry streamers for Civil War campaigns. Initially, this was only for Federal service, but the following year, it was extended to cover Confederate service as well. The streamer for Federal units is blue over grey, with the campaign name in yellow letters; that for former Confederate units is grey over blue. There are 25 separate campaign streamers for the Civil War.

The Commission recommended revoking the 1949 extension, since Confederate troops were not, by definition, fighting for the United States.

The move will affect at least 48 units and will involve the removal of 491 individual streamers. *(IS)*

WIPO (9) Saudi Arabia and the Seychelles are the latest countries who have registered their national flags at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in Geneva, Switzerland. In doing so the two countries brought their flags under the protection of Article 6ter of the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property. It protects flags, coats of arms and other state emblems adopted by them, against unauthorized registration and use as trademarks.

The national flag of Saudi Arabia was published by WIPO on 31 March 2023 under 6ter Number SA2, the Royal Standard as SA3. On the same date the national flag of the Seychelles was published and was filed under SC2. The Seychelles' coat of arms were also filed under 6ter Number SC1. *(JP)*

Belize (10) The Belizean National Flag and Coat of Arms which features prominently on the flag, were standardised in 2019 and revised in 2020, by the Ministry of Culture and the National Institute of Culture and History.

The standardisation of the flag became necessary because of the lack of uniformity. Both the flag and

coat of arms were approved by Queen Elizabeth II at independence in September 1981 and were given a heraldic description. The move is also an attempt to simplify the overall design to work well in today's digital media landscape.

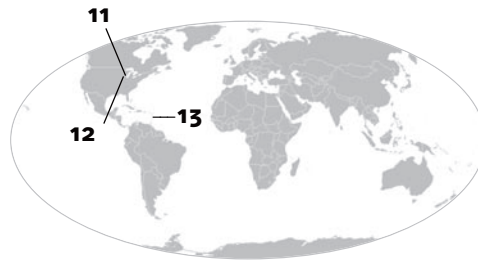
The official description of the flag - away from heraldic language - now is: 'The flag of Belize is made up of blue with a white circle and a red border, these two horizontal red borders are one-fifth of the total width of the flag, with the Coat of Arms centred on the white circle.'



The shield of the Coat of Arms is divided into three sections by a vertical line and inverted V. The base section (an inverted V) represents a ship at sea under full sail. The upper two sections show tools of the timber industry, a paddle, and a squaring axe in the left section, with a beating axe and a saw on the right. Supporting the shield are two Belizeans - a Mestizo-Belizean on the left holding a beating axe on his shoulder in his right hand, and on the right an Afro-Belizean holding a paddle on his shoulder in his left hand. Above the shield rises a mahogany tree on a grassy mount. Below the shield is a scroll with the motto written in Latin 'Sub Umbra Floreo' (meaning Under The Shade I Flourish). A wreath of 50 leaves encircles the Coat of Arms. This wreath symbolises the year 1950 when Belizeans began the struggle for Independence.'

In 2020 the design of the coat of arms was altered slightly, when the colour of the skin of the Mestizo-Belizean was made lighter than in the 2019 version. That Mestizo-Belizean has the same colour as the Afro-Belizean. *(JP)*

Illinois (11) A bill establishing a commission to



determine whether the Illinois state flag should be redesigned and possibly select a new design is awaiting the Governor's signature after being approved by the State Senate in March and the State House in mid-May.

However, the initiative is not without its critics. Votes in both chambers fell largely along party lines, with Democrats in favour and Republicans opposed. The



current Illinois state flag features a complex image, words and dates on a white background. The main image is a bald eagle perched on a rock,

with one talon grasping a shield. Below the shield is an olive branch, all of which is resting on a field of green prairie grass, with a sun rising over a stretch of blue water in the background. Below all that is the word 'ILLINOIS'.

If the Governor signs the bill, the new commission must select no more than ten new designs by 1 September 2024, after working with schools, libraries and community groups. A report from the commission is then due to the legislature three months later, outlining whether or not the state should adopt a new flag and the criteria used to select the final designs. The commission is also expected to include in its report an estimate of the cost of any changes to the state flag. (IS)

Minnesota (12) Following Utah's successful lead, another US state has created a commission to study the state flag and seal and recommend changes. On 19 May 2023, the Minnesota House of Representatives passed a bill authorising the commission to report by 1 January 2024.

Opponents of the current flag, the state seal on a

blue field, say it doesn't follow the principles of 'good flag' design, and suggest the current symbolism has racist undertones. It depicts a Native American on horseback riding away while a farmer tills the land.



The commission must come up with designs that 'accurately and respectfully reflect Minnesota's shared history, resources, and diverse cultural communities', and must also consult vexillologists. The commission is to include three members of the public, and members representing the Dakota and Ojibwe communities, as well as from African-American, Latino and Asian Minnesotans.

Appointments to the commission will be made in August. A number of alternative proposals have been put forward over the years; the one that has gained the most traction with the public is the 'Northern Star' design, based on the state's nickname of 'Étoile Du Nord', designed by two Minnesotan vexillologists, William Becker and Lee Herold. (IS)

Martinique. (13) On 2 February 2023 the French island of Martinique in the Caribbean replaced the flag it introduced in 2019

(*Flagmaster* 160, p. 11). The new flag is the red-green-black flag used since 1968 by the proponents of independence. For a full history of the



flag of Martinique see the article 'Martinique officially adopts separatists' flag, by Jo Spalburg on pages 38-43 of this *Flagmaster*. (JP)

Conferences and Meetings

Saturday 29 April 2023 was the FI Spring 2023 Conference held at The Victory Services Club, London. Mick McTiernan, military historian opened with *Choosing a flag for the Cretan State* followed by Dr. Mario Jareb, scientific advisor from the Croatian Institute of History and vice-president of Matica Hrvatska, who presented his new book *From Checkerboard to Tricolor: Development and Use of the Croatian Coat of Arms and Flag Throughout the Centuries*.

Rachel Phelan then presented her work conservation work with 150 year old flags displayed in the medieval cathedral of St Patricks, followed by a Future of the Union Flag panel discussion. The day was closed by Erik Nystul, NAVA and Design Review Subcommittee of the Utah State Flag Task Force, who presented A Beehive Flag for the Beehive State: The Origins of Utah's New State Flag.

The FI Council meeting the evening prior covered plans for the upcoming FI conferences and broadening the flag days listed on the FI website.

The next FI Council meeting will be held in **Edinburgh, Friday 17 November 2023**.

The FI Winter 2023 conference is to be held in Edinburgh, **Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 November 2023** and in partnership with Heraldry Society of Scotland. The Saturday's proceedings will be at The Royal Scots Club and will see presentations throughout the day. Both members of the FI and HSS are invited to attend the conference. The day will be opened by The Rt. Hon. Lord Provost and Lord Lieutenant of the City of Edinburgh, Robert Aldridge. This will be followed by a day of presentations organised by both the FI and HSS (speakers and programme to be communicated). As the day turns to evening, there will be a drinks reception and celebratory dinner, both at The Royal Scots Club. Sunday will see delegates visit Ashfield, where curator Ian Robertson will introduce the museum's history and collection, and to St Giles Cathedral, where Elizabeth Roads, Secretary to the Order of the Thistle, will provide a private tour.

The FI 2023 AGM will be held online later in the year. Details and date of the FI Spring 2024 conference are tbc.

FI Website

Calling all webmasters and web designers. The FI is looking to overhaul its website and we need expertise. If you are someone who can help the FI in transitioning to a new website, please do get in touch by emailing lesley.ross@flaginstitute.org.

William Crompton Library

The library catalogue is available from <https://www.flaginstitute.org/wp/explore/library-catalogue/> with over 32,000 entries. The catalogue is updated twice a year and FI members can download the *New in the Library* from the Members' Area to highlight new arrivals.

New arrivals in the library include *Banderas 166* (2023); *Genealogija, Heraldika ir Veksilologija 1* (2021) - first issue of an annual from the new member of FIAV from Lithuania; *Macedonian Herald 19* (2022); *SAVA Newsletter 95* (2022); *Vexilla Notizie 42* (2023); *Vexilloid Tabloid 98* (2023); *Vexillologie 205* (2023). □

Malcolm Good talks with

Harold Scruby, Executive Director of *Ausflag*

Harold Scruby is the Executive Director of *Ausflag*, which he and others established in 1981. *Ausflag* is an apolitical, non-profit organisation that seeks to secure the popular support of the Australian people for the adoption of a truly Australian flag. In this interview, Scruby tells Flagmaster more about these ambitions.

Q: Why should Australia change its flag?

It is bizarre that one country incorporates the Union Jack, a flag of another country, in its flag. Australia is a separate country in its own right, even if it does have a shared history with the United Kingdom. Australia is not a colony, dominion or protectorate. That is demonstrated in all aspects of Australian life, including those other obvious outward signs of national identity, its currency and national anthem. So, as a separate country, it is stupid that it incorporates the flag of another country in its flag.

Q: What does the present Australian flag say about Australia?

The flag portrays an image of child still attached to its mother. The use of the Union Jack, from a vexillological or heraldic viewpoint, also gives a sense of subordination to the United Kingdom, something Canada shook off when it adopted the maple leaf flag in the 1960s. That flag not only removed the Union Jack which had appeared on the Canadian Red Ensign, it created a distinct design which is recognised across the world. People know instantly it represents Canada and Canadians, and it created a Canadian brand that shows Canada as its own nation.

It also worth saying that not only does the Australian flag contain the flag of another country, it looks like the flags of other countries. In

particular it is easily confused with the flag of New Zealand. I don't blame people who get the two mixed up, that isn't their fault. The fault lies with Australia for not having a distinct flag. Some Australians claim that people from other countries know the differences between the two, they don't. All they see is a Union Jack which, of course, is associated with the United Kingdom. I've debated this with people who are against changing the flag but who have no idea what the stars on the flag represent, someone once said to me that it was the milky way! And even for those who do know the difference, it is impossible to tell the two flags apart when limp on a flag pole.

It gets even more ludicrous as, when Australia and New Zealand compete at sports, it isn't unusual for the Aussies to use a boxing kangaroo as their image and the Kiwis to use the silver fern. How does that make any sense, that our national flags aren't used because they are too similar or so uninspiring?

Q: What difficulties do you foresee in changing the flag?

There will always be people who oppose altering the flag. In particular, people often say that there are more important things to concentrate on, but how a country represents itself on the world stage and how Australians see themselves seems important to me.



'The Aboriginal flag has a simple classical beauty and provides the perfect symbol of reconciliation between the indigenous people and new Australians'

Some of this intransigence comes from apathy and an Emperor's new clothes syndrome from those who don't think about how the flag looks and how it doesn't create an Australian identity or a unique Australian brand.

I do though think that lessons can be learnt from New Zealand's 2015 and 2016 flag debate. I can see why many New Zealanders wanted to alter their flag as it suffers from the same problems as the Australian flag - just do an internet search on Jacinda Ardern and you'll find lots of images of her standing in front of a Union Jack as the rest of the New Zealand flag is hidden. Is it not reasonable for people to assume that she is speaking on behalf of the United Kingdom or as an extension of Britain, not on behalf of an independent country? That makes no sense, the New Zealand Prime Minister in front of the flag of another country. Ask any marketing person, you wouldn't stand in front of someone else's brand, which is what our politicians do. Previous Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison orientated the Australian flag to emphasise the Commonwealth star to try and counteract that problem.

A reason the New Zealand referendum failed to deliver a new flag was due to the alternative design being fussy. If a simple silver fern against a black or solid colour background had been put

Photo Harold Scruby, image editing Theun Okkerse

forward then the result may have been different. Getting the right design is crucial. So, the New Zealand referendum emphasised the importance of having a viable alternative that is simple, striking and meaningful to people.

Q: What is the route to change?

While we have good people on the board of *AusFlag* who see the absurdity of the present flag, ultimately of course it is those in Parliament who have the power to take action and legislate.

There could be a plebiscite, a poll of people in Australia although that would be non-binding, in the same way as there was a plebiscite on the National Anthem in 1977 which eventually saw

'Advance Australia Fair' replace 'God Save the Queen'.

Alternatively, it could come from a referendum,

but the rules around that are complex due to the need to deliver majorities across the states as well as at a national level.

Change could come from the state flags, when people see new local designs which they can associate with, and changing those flags is not as contentious as changing the national flag. For example, only eight percent of the population of New South Wales can identify its state flag and the state flags when placed together look like a sea of Union Jacks. Even the fire brigade has a Union Jack on its flag. You may have seen the proposal for a new flag for Western Australia as well as the proposed design for a new flag for New South Wales which is an absolute ripper.

Remember as well that the flag which represents Australians has changed before. For example, Australians served under the Union Jack or Australian Red Ensign during the First and Second World Wars, it would be very rare for the blue ensign to be used. It wasn't until the 1950s

that the blue ensign became more commonly used, promoted by the centre-right Liberal party whose political colours also happen to be blue.

Q: Does the death of the Queen alter the debate on Australia's national flag?

The death of the Queen does not really change the debate on the Australian flag. The same arguments hold and pressure for change has to come from inside Australia. The shape of Australia has changed since the 1950s and is far less British in its make-up, which will eventually make the change of flag possible.

Q: Are there any designs or imagery that you feel appropriate for a new national flag?

Flag design is so important as seen in the debate over changing the New Zealand flag. So this is our opportunity to do something uniquely Australian.

One option is to remove the Union Jack from the present flag and give more prominence to the Commonwealth star. However, that creates a blue and white flag which is not particularly distinct or dramatic, and which wouldn't show up well as of course the sky is blue and clouds are white. However, I believe the Aboriginal flag should be the new flag of Australia. It is increasingly seen and used and there is a general acceptance of this flag. Especially now that the copyright of the flag is owned by the Australian Government, which allows people to use it freely.

The Aboriginal flag has a simple classical beauty and provides the perfect symbol of reconciliation between the indigenous people and new Australians, including those of non-British descent. It is uniquely Australian and would be a unifying symbol which everyone can be part of. That is important, Australian is a very egalitarian society when compared to other countries and a flag that better represents everyone is surely a good thing. □

More information on 'Ausflag' can be found at www.ausflag.com.au

'The death of the Queen does not really change the debate on the Australian flag'

Sovereign's Flag for Canada

John Hall FF FFI

With the passing of Queen Elizabeth II and the accession to the throne by King Charles III the process of change has begun, and especially in the collection of personal Royal flags. Unsurprisingly, given the seemingly forward-thinking nature of the Canadian Heraldic Authority, it is the Canadians who were 'first off the mark'. On Coronation Day, 6 May 2023, Canada introduced both a new Royal Standard, and a new Canadian Crown.

The Royal Standard, in Canada is referred to as the 'Sovereign's Flag for Canada', it indicates the presence of the King when he is in Canada. It can be flown from buildings the King is visiting and on modes of transportation including aircraft, cars, and ships, that he uses when in Canada and takes precedence over all other flags.

Regarding the Canadian Royal Standard, a decision has been made not to replace the 'E' for Elizabeth II escutcheon with a 'C' for Charles III version, but to remove it entirely. The creating warrant specifically saying this is because the new flag does not become the personal flag of a particular King, but the Royal



Standard of all future succeeding Canadian Monarchs.

The standard itself is a banner of arms that Canada adopted in 1921, quartering the royal arms of England, Scotland, Ireland, and France with, in the lower third of the shield, a panel with the famous Canadian Maple leaf symbol. The leaves were originally green but changed to red in 1957. The arms themselves were further amended in 1994 to mark the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Order of Canada. A circlet containing the Latin motto of the order: *DESIDERANTES MELIOREM PATRIAM* (translated as 'they desire a better country', a reference to Hebrews 11:16) was placed around the shield in a similar way that the garter is placed around the shield of arms of the United Kingdom.

At the same time the Canadian Heraldic authority, at the request of the Canadian Government, created a new Heraldic Crown to symbolize the Canadian Monarchy. In its commentary the Canadian heraldic authority is at pains to explain that the new crown does not actually exist in physical form but is only a heraldic concept. Visually, it is

obviously based upon King Charles III's preferred Tudor style crown, but with Canadian symbolism transferred on it. Hence, the use of the Order of Canada shaped Snowflake at the top, instead of the Orb and Cross. The fleur-de-lys and crosses patent are replaced with Maple leaves and ridges representing mountains, and the jewels replaced with a waving blue band representing rivers.

The warrant implies that over time the new crown will replace the St Edward's Crown on Canadian institutional symbols, including the National Arms, military and police uniforms.

The new crown on the arms, with its symbolism of mountains and rivers finally fulfils the 2008 motion of the Canadian House of Commons that symbols representing the Canadian First Nations and their indigenous peoples should be included within its symbolism.

The warrant also gives detailed instructions how organisations can apply to use the Canadian crown in their own symbolism. and gives instructions as to how to apply to use the crown. □

The Sark flag has now Royal approval

Ian Sumner FF

A small island in the Channel Islands, Sark is territorial part of the Bailiwick of Guernsey, not administratively. Sark has as much autonomy and self-determination as Guernsey does. It has a degree of self-government, headed by the Seigneur and a small assembly, Chief Pleas.

A small island in the Channel Islands, Sark is administratively part of the Bailiwick of Guernsey, but has a degree of self-government, headed by the Seigneur and a small assembly, Chief Pleas.

From the 933, Sark was included in the territory of the Dukes of Normandy. After the Norman Conquest in 1066, the Duchy was united with the Crown of England. The Channel Islands are the last remaining part of the former Duchy to remain under the rule of the British monarch. Although, by the terms of the *Treaty of Paris* (1259) the English monarchy relinquished claims to continental Normandy and other French territory, the Channel Islands (with the exception of Chausey, under French sovereignty) remain Crown dependencies of the British throne.

Nevertheless, the British monarch is often referred to within the Islands by the traditional and conventional title of Duke of Normandy. The Sovereign is not the Duke in a constitutional sense, but instead governs in his right as King. It remains a matter of local pride for monarchists to treat the situation differently: the Loyal Toast at formal dinners is to 'The King, our Duke' rather than 'His Majesty, the King' as in the UK.

The Seigneur of Sark (or Dame if a woman) was first appointed by Queen Elizabeth I in 1565. The title was hereditary within the de Carteret family until 1720. After being sold several times, it passed to the present family in 1852. In 1927 the title passed to Sibyl

Hathaway, who remained Dame until 1974, whereupon it passed to her son Michael Beaumont, and in 2016 to Michael's son Christopher.

The earliest seals of the Seigneurie featured the family arms of de Carteret. It is not known when or why the arms attributed to the Duke of Normandy, two gold lions passant guardant on red, were adopted by the Seigneurs in preference to their own personal arms. There is no contemporary evidence that the arms with two lions were used by the Dukes of Normandy during the period when the English held Normandy.¹

In 1970, Dame Sibyl wrote that the Seigneur's personal standard was a flag of St George with a red canton bearing two gold lions passant guardant 'the lions passant [sic] of William the Conqueror ... the flag has been used here for at least two hundred years'. The canton extended over the cross, rather than being constrained within the arms of the cross. 'The long-standing query over the exact design of the flag' commented founder of the Flag Institute William Crampton, 'has been cleared up by correspondence with the Dame of Sark. Thus all flag books so far have got this wrong.'²

In his pamphlet, *A Brief History of the Seigneurie*, her grandson Michael, insisted that this flag should not be confused with the Sark flag which is red with the two 'Normandy leopards' in the centre. William Crampton disagreed and tried to persuade Michael Beaumont to change his mind. Crampton later wrote, 'We also had



The flag of Sark as registered at the College of Arms.



Aerial view of Sark. (Wikipedia)

letters from Sark residents who had seen the leaflet, asking us to do something about it, as the general opinion was that the traditional flag was for the island and the islanders, not for the Seigneur.³

Crampton suggested that the two lions should be the personal flag of the Seigneur, and the St George's flag that of the island. Such an arrangement was more logical and more in keeping with the practice of the other Channel Islands. Crampton did not like the position of the lions, which he felt made the upper left section of the flag look 'overburdened', and he would have preferred to move the lions, on a red rectangle, to the centre of the flag. But, he concluded, 'this is the traditional flag and I think we owe it to the memory of Dame Sibyl to keep on using it.'

Beaumont replied that the flag he was using 'was one inherited from my grandmother and despite her letter I am certain it was a design of her own making and has not been used for two hundred years!' In September 1991, he concluded that the St George's flag should be used as the island's flag, because it was already perceived and sold as the flag of Sark. Having made up a banner of the arms, he found it more aesthetically pleasing. It was much easier to introduce this arrangement, because as far as most people were concerned there would have been no change.

Whether the St George flag had been in use for two hundred years, or whether it was a flag of Dame Sibyl's making is by no means certain. There is a memo in the

archives of the Société Serquaise, the local historical society, dated 10 March 1938, in which Dame Sibyl asks the well-known vexillologist H.J. Pitt⁴ to draw a flag, and the resulting design is similar to the modern St George's flag.

Beaumont further commented 'there are no laws governing the use or form of the flag. It is all customary usage.' To regularise this situation, the flag was formally granted as the flag of the island by the College of Arms in 2020 at the request of the current Seigneur, Christopher Beaumont.⁵ 'I inherited the island in 2016,' he told *Flagmaster's* editor, Jos Poels, 'I noticed the flag had not been officially endorsed by the Crown and asked the College of Arms to make it happen. They did!'

The Royal approval of the flag is one of the steps to give Sark a place among other nations. There is more to come. The Seigneur: 'We already have our own country code, very soon we will have our own top level domain for the internet.' □

Notes

1 The idea that the English royal arms are a combination of the two lions of Normandy and the single lion of Guienne (the other major English royal holding in France) has no historical basis, and seems to date from the eighteenth century.

2 'Sark' in: *Flagmaster* 1 (1971) p9. The letter from Dame Sibyl, as well as the correspondence with Michael Beaumont, is in the William Crampton Library, Hull.

3 'Seigneur of Sark: new personal banner' in: *Flagmaster* 69 (1991) p11.

4 Herbert Pitt, who died in 1965, was a technical adviser to the *National Maritime Museum*, and contributed a great deal to both the 1930 edition of the Admiralty's *Flags of All Nations*, and to the 1934 flags issue of *National Geographic Magazine*. His personal papers are now in Texas. His obituary is in *Flag Bulletin* 5 (2) 1966 pp77-78.

5 *College of Arms Newsletter* 70 (January 2023).

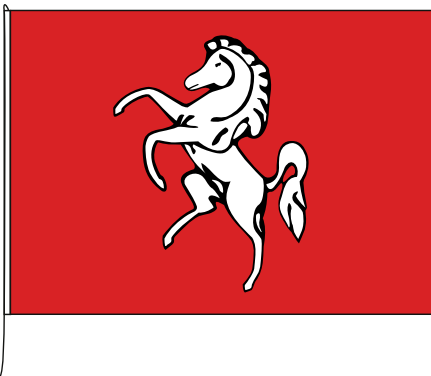
'... why is the White Horse of the Saxons of Kent ... with the motto "Invicta" still inscribed on the county banner?'

Kent and its Two Flags

James Lloyd

The white prancing horse on a red field is one of the most familiar of English county flags, partly because of its elegant simplicity and partly because of its relative age. In contrast to most county flags, which were adopted only within this century, Kent's silver stallion has enjoyed a long history, initially as the arms attributed to the kings of Kent, then as a symbol used by the modern county in various contexts, such as newspaper mastheads, military uniforms, fire marks and, eventually, flags. None of this, however, was destined to happen. The flag of Kent was nearly something very different.

... in the Kentish Stremer was a Wood ...



The first suggestion for a flag of Kent was made in 1627, in *The Battaile of Agincourt*, a poem by Michael Drayton. The relevant scene describes Henry V's army marching

aboard ship for the journey to France, organized into county militias and at the head of each militia marches a banner-bearer. Drayton describes each banner and, in the original footnotes, explains the rationale for each design:

First, in the Kentish Stremer was a Wood,
Out of whose top an arme that held a Sword,
As their right Embleme; and to make it good,
They aboute other onely had a Word,
Which was; Vnconquer'd; as that freest had stood.'

This is not, perhaps, what the modern reader was expecting and only one element of it, the motto 'Unconquered', might ring a bell. Drayton's footnote explains the design as a reference to the

Swanscombe legend. This is the story, first told by the Canterbury chronicler Thomas Sprott in the thirteenth century, that William the Bastard, freshly crowned at Westminster, then marched on Canterbury.

... the great men of all Kent realized that the whole kingdom was placed in an evil position ... they gathered all the people of the whole of Kent together at Canterbury and explained to them the imminent danger, the misery of their neighbours, the arrogance of the Normans and the wretchedness of a condition of slavery and the whole people, choosing to end their unhappy life rather than be brought under servitude's insufferable yoke, decided with common consent to meet Duke William and strive with him for the laws of their fathers ... on the appointed day the whole people gathered at Swanscombe, lurking in the darkness of the woods to lie in wait for the aforesaid duke's arrival; and, since abundant caution does no harm, this was set forth amongst them: That each one, both horsemen and foot-soldiers, should carry all the branches as a safeguard, so that, as the duke approached, with every passage anticipated, no escape should be open to him on any side. The duke, therefore, coming on the next day into the countryside near the aforesaid place, marvelled, not



1. *The Swanscombe monument, by 'Glen'*,
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/12f1/5112298444> and licensed under Creative Commons 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>).

without a troubled mind, that all the land situated around him was, as it were, a moving forest and was coming towards him at a steady pace; but, when the leaders of the Kentish people saw that Duke William was surrounded in their midst, the trumpet gave the signal, the standards were raised up high and they threw their branches away, showing, with bows stretched, swords spread, spears and other kinds of weapons brandished, that they were ready for battle ...²

The discombobulated duke promised the Men of Kent, in return for their recognition of him as king, not to impose Norman laws on the county. (*Illustration 1*)

There is no doubt that this story is legendary: not only did not a single contemporary source mention it (or any other for the intervening two hundred years) but it is also incompatible with William's well documented movements after the Battle of Hastings. He in fact marched into Kent shortly after his victory, where representatives of the county submitted to him outside Canterbury. By the time he was crowned, the county, indeed the country, was already under his control.

But no one likes a smart Alec. As late as the nineteenth century, this patriotic legend still had its defenders, who simply would not have it that this article of faith in Kentish local pride might not be true. Among many other homages, the legend inspired Drayton's suggestion for a Kentish banner and motto. The latter, now usually Latinized as 'Invicta', has stuck. By contrast, the image of a clump of trees with a sword sticking out of it has failed to gain traction, though even its ultimate conqueror, the White Horse, was not without other rivals.

The Night of the Long Knives

Some people like lists and some people like completeness and some people like a complete list and will get one by whatever means necessary. Heraldry has always attracted people of this nerdish bent and an oddity of medieval armorials is that, in their eagerness to provide a complete list of arms and in their refusal to be defeated by their own ignorance and the relative novelty of their art, heralds who had rather too much time on their hands would simply invent arms not only for foreign rulers whose arms they did not know but even for potentates who lived long before heraldry had developed. Such princes included the kings of Kent, who ruled the south-eastern corner of Britain from the arrival of Hengest and Horsa in 449 (or so the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle has it) to the kingdom's final absorption into Wessex in 825. The arms of a white horse on a red field were originally intended not for Kent as such but for the Kentish kings but, despite the modern ubiquity of the White Horse, it was not the first design attributed to Hengest and his successors.

There are too many attributed Kentish royal arms to go through all of them in an article of this length but the one that would be most relevant to *Flagmaster* is a design appearing in an armorial written by David Griffith, pursuivant to the Earl of Warwick, between 1456 and 1471.³ In a scheme of arms for all the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, it attributed to the 'Roy de Kent' the arms 'Gules three falchions palewise points in base Argent hilted Or'.⁴ (*Illustration 2*) These look much more like the design nowadays attributed to the County of Essex, so why were they originally devised for Kent and how did they come to be transferred?

Inspiration for a coat-of-arms is sometimes derived from the events of the armiger's life: an artist might bear a paintbrush or a writer a quill. Reuben College, Oxford, was recent granted arms charged with annulets and ermine spots so arranged as to spell out a message in binary. The obvious king of Kent from whom to draw inspiration for royal arms was the first, Hengest. The references to him in Bede and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle are rather spare and uninformative but these bare bones were fleshed out by a considerable body of legend and it is in this that



2. College of Arms, Vincent 170, fol. 149r (copied from London, British Library, Harley MS 2169, fol. 9r, which was not available at the time of writing).
Reproduced by permission of the Kings, Heralds and Pursuivants of Arms.

we find the likely inspiration for the arms of three daggers.

With the Britons having fought the Saxons to a standstill, Hengest sued for peace and the two sides met for a conference. An agreement was made and a feast held to celebrate, attended by three hundred British leaders. Hengest ordered the same number of Saxons to mingle with the crowd, hiding in their boots their eponymous weapon, the single-edged knives known as 'seaxes'. Once the Britons were suitably intoxicated, Hengest cried out 'Nimed eure seaxes!', seize your seaxes. The Saxons drew their knives and slaughtered the entire leadership of the Britons.⁵

This story is undoubtedly unhistorical but no more so than the idea that Anglo-Saxon kings had coats-of-arms. Such legendary history, still generally taken seriously in the Middle-Ages, was exactly the sort of thing that heralds would have mined for inspiration when drawing up their pleasingly complete lists of the arms of England's rulers. To attribute to the kings of

Kent arms that alluded to the sneaky tactic whereby the first king of Kent secured the Saxon conquest of Britain would have made perfect sense.

The Saxon Steed

How, then, did the design end up being re-assigned to Essex? For this, we can blame the Germans.

The short answer is that the three seaxes were re-assigned to Essex after being supplanted as the attributed arms of the kings of Kent by the White Horse but how this happened is rather an involved story. An irony of the White Horse as an icon of Kentish identity is that not only is it not Kentish in origin but it is not even English. Like Hengest himself, the White Horse actually came from

Germany. It first appears in clearly identifiable and coloured form around 1380, in the Wappenbuch von den Ersten, an armorial drawn up by a herald working in the lower Rhine region. Here the arms 'Gules a horse passant Argent' are depicted under the label 'Di ald waepen van Bruynswick'.⁶ (Illustration 3)

The arms of the Dukes of Brunswick were really 'Gules two lions passant guardant Or' (in other words identical to the English Royal Arms, minus one lion) and there is no evidence that a white horse on a red field really had preceded this design.

The White Horse was, however, used as a quartering in the arms of several branches of the ducal family, the House of Welf, since at least 1371 and it had appeared as a crest and as a seal device some years before then. Exactly how and why the white horse, or Saxon Steed (Sachsenross) as it is known in this context, came to be adopted is disputed but one popular idea was that it was a kind of protest against



3. The old arms of Brunswick from the Wappenbuch von den Ersten, fol. 28r (reproduced from Wappenbuch von den Ersten genannt "Codex Seffken": Der Urschrift aus dem Ende des 14. Jahrhunderts, edited by Ad. M. Hildebrandt and Gustav A. Seyler (Berlin, 1893)).

the House's loss of the Duchy of Saxony.⁷

This hypothesis depends on a passage written by the early fifteenth-century historian Gobelinus Person:

Now, the leaders of that army who set out from Saxony to Britain were the sons of the duke of Angria or Enger [a division of Saxony], one of whom (as Bede says) was called Hengest and the other Horsa, the cant of whose names in the vulgar tongue signifies a royal horse of outstanding strength and beauty, which princes mainly use in jousts and tournaments. And it is perhaps for that reason that the arms of certain dukes of Saxony are a white horse, for they have received such arms from their progenitors since ancient times.⁸

The name Hengest simply means a stallion in Old English and closely related languages, so Gobelinus is explaining the stallion on the Welf arms as an allusion to this ancient Saxon leader. Whether or not this really was the intended implication of the Welfs' adoption of the symbol, the idea that the White Horse on a red field was the ancient symbol of Saxony became popular and survives today in the arms of the modern German federal State of Lower Saxony, which are identical to the arms of Kent.

(Illustration 4)

English heralds, as we have seen, were more interested in the three seaxes but that changed in 1605, with the publication of *Restitution of Decayed Intelligence in Antiquities Concerning the most Noble and Renowned English Nation*. This was written in Antwerp by Catholic convert Richard Verstegan. A history of the Anglo-Saxon roots of English culture, the *Restitution* contains two sections relevant to the present enquiry.

The first is a discussion of the derivation of the name 'Saxon', which Verstegan connected to the tribe's characteristic weapon, the seax. 'Of this kynd of



4. The arms of the State of Lower Saxony, reproduced from <https://www.heraldry-wiki.com/heraldrywiki/index.php?title=Niedersachsen> by kind permission of Ralf Hartemink.



5. 'the banner or ensigne first by them spread in the feild': Verstegan, *Restitution*, p. 117. Reproduced by Courtesy of the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury.

hand-seax, Erkenwyne king of the East-Saxo[n]s did beare for his armes, three argent, in a feild gules.'⁹ Verstegan, it seems, was the one who decided that the three seaxes arms were better suited to Essex than to Kent.

This conclusion may have been influenced by what he thought was a new discovery about Hengest's arms:

Hingistus was doubtlesse a Prince of the chiefest blood and nobillitie of Saxonie and by birth of Angria in Vvestphalia ... his wapen or armes beeing a leaping whyte horse or Hengst in a red feild ... which was the ancient armes of Saxonie, that the chief Princes and dukes haue there long since for many ages together borne.¹⁰

He illustrated his argument with a picture of Hengest and Horsa landing at Ebbsfleet (dressed in rather an Ottoman interpretation of Anglo-Saxon armour), with a banner-bearer behind them carrying a flag depicting said horse. (Illustration 5)

It was Verstegan, evidently persuaded by the traditional explanation for the use of the symbol by the House of Welf, who introduced the general English reader to the White Horse as the arms of Hengest. The three seaxes, nudged out of their original position, could now be re-purposed for the more etymologically pleasing role of the arms of the kings of Essex.

The Triumph of the Steed

This did not, however, mean that the White Horse now became the symbol of the modern County of Kent automatically. It was supposed to have been used by its ancient kings but it did not therefore follow that it would now be used by the sheriff, the lord-lieutenant or the justices of the peace. As we saw at the start of this article, in 1627, twenty-two years after Verstegan published his *Restitution*, Michael Drayton imagined a very different banner to have been borne by the Kentish militia. It was in the eighteenth century that the White Horse trotted out of antiquarianism and into everyday use. From 1723, the arms of Hengest started to appear on the masthead of the *Kentish Post*. (*Illustration 6*) The West and East Kent Militias (raised in 1759 and 1760 respectively) likewise used the White Horse on sash-buckles, grenadier's caps and regimental colours.¹¹ (*Illustration 7*)

The Militias, however, were not the only military force in Kent. In 1785, the Society of Royal Kentish Bowmen was formed.¹² The Society's emblem was a group of oak trees, from which emerges an arm in armour, holding an arrow, with the word 'INVICTA' glowing above it. Though adjusted the better to suit an archery club, this emblem was obviously inspired by Drayton's poem and was displayed on the Society's standards (the closest that Drayton's banner came to becoming a reality).

This also marks one of the earliest examples of the use of the Latin motto, rather than Drayton's original English. 'Invicta' would re-appear in 1802, this time combined with the attributed arms of Hengest, on the fire marks of the Kent Fire Insurance Company. (*Illustration 8*) This seems to have been the first time that the now-familiar symbol and the now-familiar motto appeared in their now-familiar combination.

The nineteenth century would see the White Horse and 'Invicta' become firmly established as the arms and motto of Kent. It would also see them branch out into a new medium, for in 1841 we get what appear to be the earliest bona fide references to a county flag, in *The Kentish Coronet*, a compendium of essays, short stories and poems on Kentish themes. One of these stories is about Sir Thomas Wyatt's rebellion against Mary I, which describes Wyatt calling upon the Men of



6. *The Kentish Post*, 11 December 1723, reproduced from <https://twitter.com/NatTrustArch/status/1075718571530039302> (accessed 17 April 2023).

7. *Mitre cap badge of the East Kent Militia*, reproduced from <https://www.britishempire.co.uk/forces/armyuniforms/britishinfantry/buffs1881.htm> by kind permission of Charles Griffin.



8. *Kent Fire Insurance mark*, reproduced from <https://scottishantiques.com/Kent-Insurance-Company-Fire-Mark> (accessed 17 April 2023).

Kent to revolt with the words 'Up with the rampant horse, and let his neigh echo through the land ... Up with the old INVICTA, let it float proudly upon the breeze.'¹³ Another contributor to the compendium made a similar reference (in, of all the unlikely places, an essay on Kentish botany):

... it is not only excusable, but quite natural, that the men of Kent should range themselves beside their banner of the Horse rampant, bearing the bold motto INVICTA, with a feeling of complacency ...¹⁴

It is tempting to explain these quotations away as referring to a hypothetical banner of the arms, as in Verstegan's illustration but such a banner would not have had 'Invicta' written on it, since the motto was not an integral part of the arms. Instead, these writers seem to refer to an actual flag, depicting the White Horse with the motto embroidered below it.

One of the few disadvantages suffered by those born in the county is the outsider's perennial question 'Are you a Man of Kent or a Kentish Man?' Until the eighteenth century, the two terms were used interchangeably but since then the silly faux tradition has developed of confining the grander-sounding genitive phrase to one half of the county but which half this varies (the only consistent point is that it is always where the person making the assertion happened to be born). In 1865, a native of West Kent asked

... why is the White Horse of the Saxons of Kent who *submitted* [original emphasis] to, but were never *conquered* by, the Normans, with the motto "Invicta," still inscribed on the county banner? Was it not conceded by William rather to perpetuate the memory of the brave stand made by the men of West Kent against him ... and granted them as a condition of their peaceful submission to his rule ...¹⁵

That this argument is a Russian doll of nonsense should go without saying but it does have the historical value of confirming the existence, at least by this date, of a literal flag with the motto written on it.

In this period, flags still tended to be used for practical, rather than purely demonstrative, purposes, so it is unclear who was actually flying this flag. The first organisation that is known to have used it was



9. *Sussex v Kent County Cricket Match (1913)*.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IouZ7b_JK-c&feature=youtu.be
(at 5.09), reproduced by courtesy of Jason Saber.

Kent County Cricket Club, which was formed in 1870 from the amalgamation of several local clubs, under the presidency of the third Baron Harris.¹⁶ A fascinating film of a match between Kent and Sussex at Canterbury in 1913 includes some shots of a dark-coloured flag charged with a light-coloured horse over a heraldic scroll. (*Illustration 9*) There can be no doubt that this is the flag of Kent, to which allusion was made at least as far back as 1841.

The overlooked importance of cricket clubs in British vexicological history is demonstrated by these comments by W. J. Gordon, in the 1915 edition of *Flags of the World*, that cricket clubs

... as a rule are content to fly a flag with their initials. Among those that do otherwise may be noted some of the county clubs such as Middlesex with the three seaxes turned edge downwards and Essex with its three seaxes edge upwards, Kent with its rampant white horse, Warwickshire with its bear and ragged staff, Yorkshire with its white rose, and Lancashire with its red rose.¹⁷

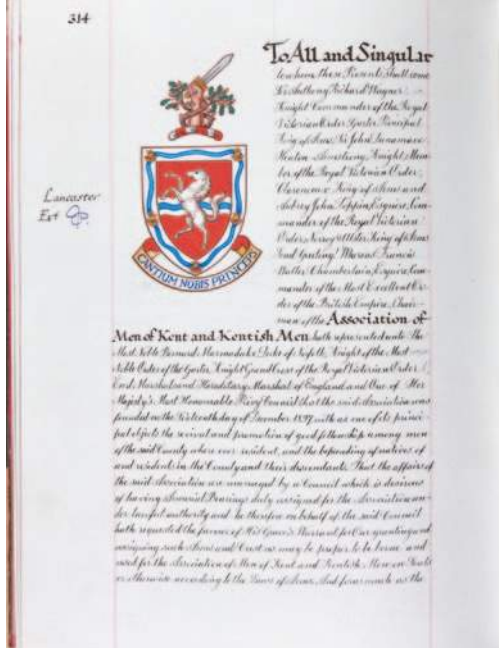
Here we see how county cricket helped to promote not only the White Horse as the flag of Kent but also the three seaxes, originally designed for Kent, as the flag of Essex.

This influence was felt again in 1930, when Kent County Council, which had been using the White Horse since its formation in 1889, applied for a grant of arms. The Chairman of the County Arms Sub-Committee was the fourth Lord Harris, former Captain of the County Cricket Club and son of the Club's inaugural President. Some thought was given to putting the horse on an Azure field, rather than Gules but Lord Harris pointed out that

... the contrast between such a field and the white horse may not be sufficiently marked, and especially so if such a depiction is displayed on a flag which is subjected to severe weather conditions.¹⁸

He had good reason to know. The committee agreed to keep it red.

Indeed, the Council ended up being granted the attributed arms of Hengest undifferenced, though with additional crest and supporters.¹⁹ The conferral also



10). Arms of the Association of Men of Kent and Kentish Men, in College of Arms MS Grant Book 126, p. 126. reproduced by permission of the Kings, Heralds and Pursuivants of Arms.

authorised the Council to fly a banner of the arms, so that, for the first time since Verstegan suggested it in 1605, a simple flag of a prancing white horse on a red field, uncomplicated by a motto, really did fly over Kent.²⁰ It was apparently the force of this example that caused the motto to disappear from the flag as used by members of the public. The author of the present article, despite being a Man of Kent himself, has certainly never seen such a specimen.

The flag of Kent is one of the oldest of English county flags. Since most English county flags are inventions of the last twenty years, that is not necessarily an impressive boast and, in its established form, the flag is in fact less than a hundred years old. A closely related flag, however, differing from that now used only by the vexicologically displeasing presence of the motto, had been in use for about another hundred years previously and the basic design has been associated with Kent, at least in theory, since 1605. The motto, now happily detached from the flag but often combined with the arms, is almost equally old, having been first suggested, though in the vernacular, by Michael Drayton in 1627.

The rest of Drayton's design for a county flag has failed to gain the same traction but it has not been completely forgotten. In 1963, arms were granted to the Association of Men of Kent and Kentish Men. (Illustration 10) The model, for the most part, is the arms of Hengest but what really deserves attention is the crest: 'A Cubit Arm grasping a Sword bend sinisterwise proper hilt and pommel Or the Arm encircled by two branches of Oak fructed proper'.²¹ Never waste a good idea. □

Notes

1. The Bataille of Agincourt by Michael Drayton, ed. R. Garnett (London, 1893), p. 29. It should be clarified that this scene is not historical: the English army in 1415 was not organized in this fashion, Welsh counties have been included that were not created until 1535 and the whole scene is strongly reminiscent of similar scenes in contemporary Italian poetry.
2. *Historiæ Anglicanæ Scriptores X*, ed. Sir R. Twysden (London, 1652), cols. 1786-7 (authors translation).
3. London, British Library, Harley MS 2169, known as Randle Holme's Book (named, as armorials usually are, after a later owner, not its author or commissioner). For the date, see Sir Anthony Wagner, *A Catalogue of English Medieval Rolls, Aspilogia 1* (London, 1950), pp. 101-2. For a printed edition of the armorial, see J. Foster (ed.), *Two Tudor Books of Arms: Harleian MSS. Nos. 2169 & 6163*, De Walden Library (London, 1904). On Griffith, see W. H. Godfrey, Sir A. R. Wagner and H. S. London, *The College of Arms, Queen Victoria Street, London Survey 16* (London, 1958), p. 306.
4. BL, Harley 2169, fol. 9r (ed. Foster, *Two Tudor Books of Arms*, pp. 10-11).
5. This story is first recorded in the early-ninth-century *Historia Brittonum* §46 (ed. T. Mommsen, *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica: Chronica Minora Saec. IV. V. VI. VII.*, vol. 3 (Berlin, 1898), pp. 189-90).
6. For this and what follows, see P. Veddelar,

- 'Landessymbole', in *Die Braunschweigische Landesgeschichte: Jahrtausendrückblick einer Region*, ed. H.-R. Jarck and G. Schildt (Brunswick, 2000), pp. 79-98, at pp. 83-5.
7. G. Schnath, *Das Sachsenross: Entstehung und Bedeutung des niedersächsischen Landeswappens*, 1st ed., *Schriftenreihe der Landeszentrale für Heimatdienst in Niedersachsen Series B Volume 6* (Hanover, 1956), pp. 41-2.
 8. *Cosmidromius Gobelini Personi*, ed. M. Jansen (Münster, 1900), p. 11 (author's translation).
 9. R. Verstegan, *A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence: In antiquities, concerning the most noble and renowned English nation* (Antwerp, 1605), p. 22.
 10. *Ibid.*, pp. 120-1.
 11. P. J. Haythornthwaite, 'Belt-Plates of the West Kent Militia', *Bulletin of the Military Historical Society* 35 (1984-5), 20-1; T. Fisher, *The Kentish Traveller's Companion* (Canterbury and Rochester, 1776), p. 60; W. Y. Carman, 'Grenadier Cap of the East Kent Militia', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 26 (1948), 35.
 12. For a brief history of the Society, see J. H. L. de Vaynes and J. W. Ebsworth (eds.), *The Kentish Garland*, 2 vols. (Hertford, 1881-2), pp. 380-1.
 13. H. G. Adams, 'Hystory [sic] and Romance', in *The Kentish Coronal* (London, 1841), pp. 49-55, 81-8, 113-19 and 161-71, at p. 82.
 14. A. Pratt, 'On the Vegetable Productions of Kent', in *Kentish Coronal*, ed. Adams, pp. 17-19, 65-9 and

- 97-101, at p. 17.
15. G. Pryce, 'Men of Kent and Kentish Men', *Notes and Queries*, 3rd Series, VIII (1865), 92.
 16. D. Moore, *The History of Kent County Cricket Club*, rev. ed. (London, 1981), pp. 13-17 and 31-3. On the origin and descent of the baronies 'Harris of Seringapatam and Mysore' and 'Harris of Belmont', see G. E. Cokayne et al., *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain, and the United Kingdom, Extant, Extinct, or Dormant*, rev. ed., 13 vols. (London, 1910-59), vol. 6, pp. 329-31.
 17. W. J. Gordon, *Flags of the World Past and Present: Their Story and Associations*, 2nd ed. (London and New York, 1915), pp. 132-5.
 18. Letter of the County Clerk to the College of Arms, dated 4 July 1931, in Maidstone, Kent History and Library Centre, C/A3/3C/2, Grant of Arms - Creation of County Arms Sub-Committee and submission of alternative designs, 1931; and memorandum, dated 13 March 1952, in C/A3/3C/9, County Arms - File 8, 1950-2.
 19. The arms were finally granted on 17 October 1933 (G. Briggs, *Civic & Corporate Heraldry*, (London, 1971), p. 216).
 20. Oral tradition (reported on an online forum <http://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/gb-kent.html>) claims that the first flag was presented to the Council by a Labour M.P., which caused it to be misconstrued as a socialist symbol. In fact, Kent had no Labour M.P.s in 1933, so this amusing story appears to be untrue.
 21. College of Arms, Grants Book 126, pp. 314-15.

Obituary **Kevin Harrington FF**

(1934-2023)

Jos Poels FF

Albert Kevin Harrington, known to family, friends and vexillologists as 'Kevin', died on 19 February 2023 at the age of 88. The vexillologist died on a plane returning to Canada from Turkey where he was undergoing cancer treatment. In recent years Kevin, who lived in Toronto, had suffered a number of health setbacks, including melanoma.

Kevin was one of six children born to Frank and Alice (née McKay). His younger brother, Tom, lives in Edmonton. He was predeceased by his parents and siblings, Bryan, Maureen, Joan and Elaine; and his beloved niece, Linda (Maureen's daughter). His circle of family and friends was ever-growing as he kept in touch with the younger generations of nieces and nephews, and through his social connections with newcomers, language learners and travellers (he was an enthusiastic host for the Couch Surfer network).

Kevin, who grew up in and around Toronto, had a long-standing interest in flags and heraldry and was for many years a leading figure in the field of vexillology. He was known not only in Canada for his enthusiasm for flags, but the whole English-speaking world also listened to him when he talked about them. Whatever he said, it was always infused with humour and wordplay.

As a member of the North American Vexillological Association (NAVA), Kevin attended the 18th international meeting in October 1984. This conference brought together the Canadian members of



NAVA. They decided to form the *Canadian Flag Association / Association Canadienne de Vexillologie* (CFA), which took place in Vancouver on 6 February 1985.

Kevin started *Flagscan* (a play on the words *flags*, *Canada* and *scanning*) and became its editor. The first mimeographed issue of the journal saw the light of day in the autumn of 1986. As editor he drew on his skills as a geography teacher in Scarborough and as head of the library department at Agincourt.

Over the years the editor of *Flagscan* grew into the CFA. He became its president. The organisation grew from 11 to 250 members, mainly in the English-speaking world. CFA became full member of FIAV in 1993.

Kevin attended many FIAV congresses. At the 2007 Congress he was honoured to be nominated as a Fellow of FIAV. At ICV27 in London (2017) he presented a paper on *Flags and the anniversaries of 2017: myths, mistakes, misconceptions*. Last year he took part in the Ljubljana Flag Congress (ICV29) via video link. It was clear from his face that he wasn't well when he presented his paper *Heroes of America on Flags*.

His greatest joy was simply being with people, sharing good times and making lasting friendships. My friendship began in the late 80s when I asked him about a strange Canadian flag he had published in *Flagscan*. He generously told me all he knew about it. He replied to every letter and email. The last time I spoke to Kevin face to face, he turned to my wife and told her: 'Yeah, we have known each other for more than 30 years. We became friends in the days we were young and beautiful. Look at us now.' He was joking, but not really. □

Vexillology as a university course

Elaijah Lapay

An undergraduate course created to teach students about vexillology has recently given students at Duke University, North Carolina, USA, an opportunity to understand flags and their importance when critically thinking about global issues, from race to colonialism, and has expanded my own knowledge of this subject.

For as long as I can remember, I have always found flags and vexillology an interesting subject. The start of flags as an academic pursuit for me came when I started an Instagram account, @flagsoftheglobe (originally @flagsoftheus). It was a project for an American History course where I documented the history of every American state flag. When the project ended and as I began my undergraduate studies at Duke University, I kept the account going, writing and posting daily, about a flag from states, countries, continents, and history. I soon began to identify an academic benefit from organizing the lessons and trends that I had learnt from my research into information that others could also learn from.

At the end of my first semester in Autumn 2020, as an undergraduate at Duke University, I learned about House Courses, 'courses that are developed in response to student interests and concerns'. These are unusual, compared to other university courses that offer half-credit courses under Duke University's course credit-hour system that may be taught by Duke undergraduates supervised by a faculty mentor.

During the 2020-2021 Winter break between my first and second semesters, I began the difficult process of trying to construct, what to my knowledge had never been done before, an introductory-level undergraduate course on flags and symbols that

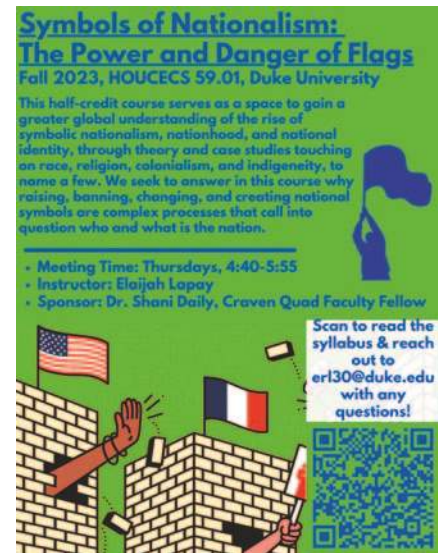
required no previous background knowledge. I started by outlining what topics I wanted to cover and what key 'flag case studies', would form the basis of weekly topic discussions. I received help from several people, including my faculty sponsor in Duke's International Comparative Studies Department, and from NAVA, the *North American Vexillological Association*, that helped me think about the course's content, logistics, and keeping me in check every once in a while, to not be too ambitious. I researched bibliographies and NAVA's own resources to identify who and what was available for the topics I wanted to cover. Difficult decisions had to be made about what should and should not be included in the course and over time a syllabus began to form.

I applied in Spring 2021 to deliver the first iteration of my House Course in Autumn 2021, with a syllabus under the catchy title of: 'Symbols of Nationalism: The Power and Danger of Flags'. This title was intended to capture the attention of those interested in flags and more broadly the impact of symbols and graphic imagery on global society and the effect these symbols have on how the world is viewed, with flags being the primary content of the course.

The course starts with a general overview for understanding flags and nationalism by contextualizing Duke's own symbols and its connections with flags and nationalism before



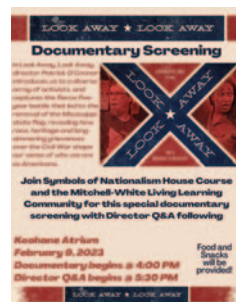
The student group with Michael Green of Flags for Good following his Spring 2023 lecture.



A description of the course content.

covering the following topics: race and racism, religion, authoritarianism, colonization and decolonization, indigeneity, statelessness, (im)migration and diaspora, and finally, the Internet.

The course includes a number of interesting guest speakers who, I felt, enhanced the course and provide a different perspective from my own of vexillology. These individuals have all supported my passion for improving people's knowledge of flags, and I am grateful for the help I received from Ted Kaye, Stephen Knowlton, Scott Mainwaring, and Chris Eckels, who I met through NAVA. Also, Michael Green of Flags for Good whose TedTalks were watched as part of the course, Bruce Berry from Southern Africa Vexillological Association (SAVA) and Patrick O'Connor, who directed the documentary *Look Away, Look Away*. The course examined a flag 'case study' using Patrick O'Connor's documentary on the influence that state flag symbols and Confederate emblems have in both U.S. national and local politics. It looked at how processes for changing and choosing new flags can spark complex debates that focus on what it means to belong.



I have to admit that delivering the first course did not always go as well as I wanted. The first semester was in Autumn 2021 and I was only able to deliver the syllabus

virtually to just one student. The two of us continued together through the semester and with the support of our guest speakers, we both learned from each other as a student and as an instructor learning how to instruct.

The second semester of the course was in Spring 2022 with a similar syllabus but now with four students and a more hybrid teaching format. During the semester hundreds of undergraduate students at Duke, including me and three of my four students camped in line for the chance to attend the final home game of Coach Mike Krzyzewski, 'Coach K' as he's known, the University men's basketball coach against our biggest rivals, the University of North Carolina. My class discussed nationalism and flags within the context of the university system, and how Duke logos can represent some of the powers of identity, formation and dangers of division when discussing flags, nationalism, and representation.

The course is just finished its fourth semester with ten new students, and I am preparing for a fifth semester. I am proud of what I have been able to achieve. Although the course is centered around flags, the discussions that have taken place in the classroom and elsewhere have extended far beyond flags. I am proud to have led conversations about the meaning of belonging, identity and power. And as always, I am always looking for the next topic to add to my syllabus. □

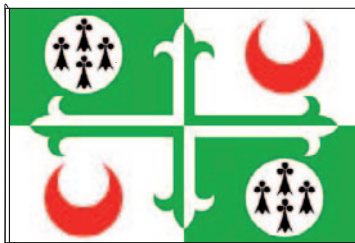
Various regions throughout Europe display the heraldic charge of ermine spots on their flag

The ermine in European flag design

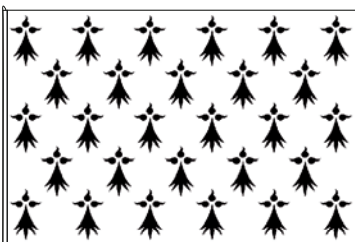
- *Some examples*

Stephen Rayner

Throughout my time as a history undergraduate at the University of Cambridge, I have occasionally witnessed the flag of Girton College flying atop its redbrick gatehouse tower. Its design, a variant of the college arms,¹ incorporates ermine spots, a heraldic charge historically linked with foremost officials² which imitates the winter fur of stoats.



The flag of Girton College, Cambridge. The ermine spots are visible in the green quarters of the flag.



Banner of arms of the medieval Duchy of Brittany.

The ermine spots in this instance represent Barbara Bodichon, a co-founder of the college, as the coat of arms of her father's family also used this heraldic charge.³ Nevertheless, the inclusion of ermine spots in coats of arms and flag design is not the exclusive domain of Girton College, nor does it solely belong to British heraldic and vexillological tradition. Indeed, the appearance of ermine spots in flags is visible across Europe, and testifies to the diffusion of heraldic conventions across the continent. This article surveys the diverse application of ermine spots in European flags, identifies differences in visual depiction, and isolates those examples where the use of ermine spots has acquired symbolic meaning in vexillological design.

Ermine spots in European flag design

The use of ermine spots in European flags has achieved a broad, continental reach. Its use is most frequent in Brittany, a Celtic region on the northwestern coast of France. Here, the significant concentration of flags which include ermine spots reflects the traditional importance of this heraldic design to the region. The first use of ermine spots in the Breton context is traceable to the medieval Duchy of Brittany, which incorporated this heraldic charge into its coat and banner of arms.⁴ This design has been reproduced in modern Breton flags thereafter.

Ermine spots are famously visible on the modern flag of Brittany. They can also be seen in the flags

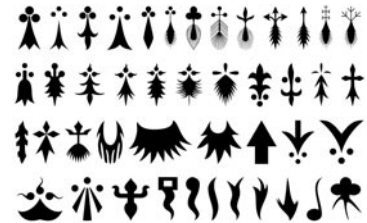


The flag of Brittany (France)

of various settlements within the region, in which the ermine spots signal the affiliation of the location with its Breton identity. The town of Vannes, the historic county of Pays de Dol and the department of Loire Atlantique each exemplify this pattern in their flags.⁵ Loire Atlantique is actually situated in the region of Pays de la Loire, yet this region borders Brittany to the northwest, and forms part of 'historical' Brittany.⁶ This reveals that the use of ermine spots in French flags is not confined to the modern boundaries of Brittany, although examples become more sparse upon broadening the search. Ermine spots are noticeably visible on the flag of Ain, a department in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region of eastern

Ermine spots

The ermine spot is a kind of heraldic charge which emulates the white, winter fur of stoats. Ermine fur was historically used to line the ceremonial clothes of the foremost elites, such as coronation gowns and peerage caps. This convention, whilst retaining its traditional association with royalty and high-ranking nobility, was translated into heraldic and vexillological design. Ermine spots are still displayed on several flags and coats of arms throughout Europe, and their visual depiction varies significantly.



Some of the various forms which ermine spots have taken in heraldic and flag design.

France, as well as the regional flag of Pays de la Loire. In both of these flags, the ermine spots are just one of various heraldic symbols incorporated within its design, and in each case the traditional French fleur-de-lis is also present.⁷

In England, ermine spots appear on the county flags of Norfolk and Shropshire.⁸ Members of the royal family which do not possess their own standard use a royal standard with an ermine border, as was visible on the flag which draped the coffin of Princess Diana.⁹ The adoption of an official flag by the



Princess Diana's coffin was draped in a Royal Standard, with its ermine border visible at the front of the coffin.

county of Leicestershire, whose design stylistically embeds ermine spots into a white, five-petal rose, offers a recent addition to this list.¹⁰ In Ireland, ermine spots are visible on the flag of Donegal, and are also traceable to a select number of flags representing regions within Scandinavia, Belgium and Portugal.¹¹ In Central Europe, ermine spots can be found on the flags of Chotětov and Cologne, located in the Czech Republic and Germany respectively.¹² This heraldic convention has noticeably spread further east, as ermine spots also appear on the flag of Knjaževac in Serbia, as well as that of Shakhovskaya County in Russia.¹³

Variation in visual presentation

The use of ermine spots in European heraldry has given rise to a considerable variety of visual presentation, which clearly emerges upon observing the regional flags which display this heraldic charge. However, there exists a recurring, although



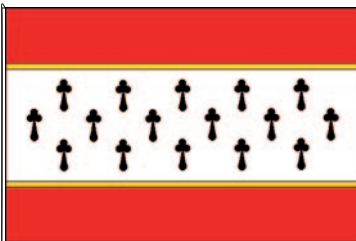
The flag of Leicestershire (England).



The flag of Norfolk (England).



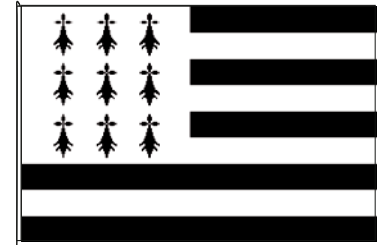
The flag of Cologne (Germany).



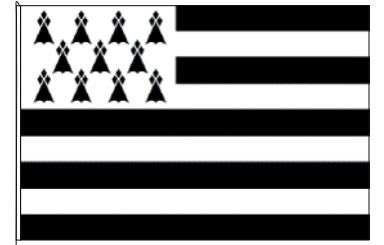
The flag of Chotětov (Czechia).

certainly not exhaustive, pattern for the presentation of ermine spots. In most cases, the ermine spot has a fimbriated bottom of between three and five roots. These roots converge at a single point at the top, surrounding which are three small offshoots. One anomaly is the flag of Cologne, whose ermine spots do not conform to the aforementioned pattern.¹⁴ Indeed, it must be questioned whether the black spots on the flag of Cologne can rightly be regarded as ermine spots, as the forthcoming section acknowledges. The flags of Leicestershire and Norfolk are also distinctive as the bottom of the ermine spots are depicted with a single root rather than multiple.¹⁵ This is also the case for the flag of Chotětov in Czechia.¹⁶

The depiction of ermine spots is also subject to variation within individual flags. Morvan Marchal, who designed the flag of Brittany in 1923, was an ardent Breton nationalist. This sentiment was conveyed by his design in two principal ways. Firstly, the flag consciously aligns in its design with the flag of the United States, which Marchal admired as a symbol of freedom.¹⁷ Secondly, the ermine spots recall the autonomous Duchy of Brittany which, although bound to its neighbour as a vassal state and linked within a dynastic union thereafter, was not completely subsumed into the Kingdom of France until 1547.¹⁸ These symbolic



The Breton flag used at the Paris International Exhibition, 1937.



Modernised design of the flag of Brittany, c.2004.

choices aside, Marchal offered no official description for the appearance and quantity of the ermine spots within the Breton flag.¹⁹ Hence, various versions of the Breton flag have emerged throughout the near 100 year history of the Gwenn-ha-Du, with these designs diverging on their presentation and quantity of the ermine spots. For example, the Breton flag used at the Paris International Exhibition in 1937 only used nine ermine spots, which occupied an unconventionally large, white canton.²⁰ 'Modernised' designs of the Breton flag have also been proposed in recent years, in which the ermine spots visibly take a different form to their original depiction.²¹

Yet perhaps the most striking deviation from the most conventional pattern is the depiction of the stoat rather than the ermine spots themselves. This has been translated onto the flags of various regions throughout



The flag of St Malo (Brittany)



The flag of Vannes (Brittany).

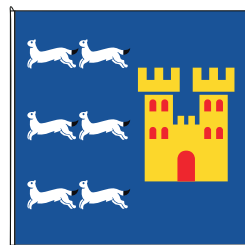
Europe. The flag of the Breton city of St Malo includes a stoat with a golden cape, yet does not visibly depict any ermine spots.²² The flag of Vannes, a town in Brittany, also depicts a caped stoat against a red field, yet this cape is decorated with ermine spots in the style typical to the region.²³ According to the digital archives of the website *Flags of the World*, a number of former Finnish provinces also contained visual depictions of stoats in their flags without the use of ermine spots.²⁴ This can be seen in the flags of the now disestablished provinces of Oulu, Lapland and Western Finland, with each of these flags serving as a banner for their coat of arms.

Numerical variation

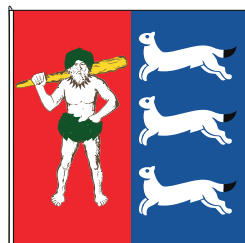
The number of ermine spots vary considerably across different flags, and in most cases the amount of ermine spots appears to be motivated by decorative rather than symbolic concerns. Nevertheless, there are two flags in

which the inclusion and quantity of ermine spots possess particular symbolic significance. These flags belong to Brittany and Cologne. However, as alluded to previously, it is necessary to assess whether the eleven black spots on the coat of arms and flag of Cologne can suitably be characterised as ermine spots. To this end, I am extremely thankful for the contributions of Professor James Floyd and Ian

Sumner for directing me towards the information which elucidated this matter. The black spots on the Cologne flag and coat of arms have been diversely categorised as 'flames sable', 'drops', 'flames' and 'tears'.²⁵ Indeed, the depiction of the black spots on the modern flag of Cologne closely resemble tears, although ermine spots in the style typical to Brittany have historically been used in the city's coat of arms.²⁶ This appears at odds with the general consensus amongst contributors to the *Flags of the World* website that the black spots on the modern flag should be categorised as ermine spots.²⁷ The official city website accounts for this peculiar inconsistency. Here, it is claimed that the eleven 'drops', 'flames' or 'tears'²⁸ on the modern coat of arms and flag of Cologne represent St Ursula and her entourage of ten virgins. The story of St Ursula is linked to Cologne as she, as well as her companions, were killed by the Huns not far from the city in the late 4th century.²⁹ However, the website acknowledges that the people of Cologne believe that the eleven black spots are ermine tails, which represents Ursula's status as a Breton princess.³⁰ The implication is that the presence of ermine spots on the modern flag of Cologne should be regarded as a popular and subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, the perceived presence of this heraldic charge still merits recognition. It seems



The flag of Oulu Province (Finland).



The flag of Lapland Administrative Province (Finland).



The flag of Western Finland Province (Finland).

that, for many in Cologne, it is the distinct appearance and quantity of ermine spots which collectively convey their historical connection to St Ursula.



In this fifteenth century painting,³¹ the coat of arms of Cologne clearly depicts ermine spots. The black spots visible on the modern flag are depicted differently.

Although the flag of Brittany also contains eleven ermine spots, I have not found any information to suggest that these were consciously intended as an allusion to the story of St Ursula, or were assigned any symbolic meaning at all by its original designer. However, the eleven ermine spots have assumed a deeper significance amongst Breton nationalist circles, who maintain that the eleven spots correspond to the eleven letters of the separatist slogan Breizh dieuh (which translates to 'free Brittany').³² Therefore, for the people of Brittany and Cologne, the exact quantity of ermine spots interestingly possesses symbolic importance, and denote specific elements of regional heritage and self-identity.

Conclusion

The incorporation of ermine spots into heraldic and vexillological design is a pan-European phenomenon. Its appearance across various European flags, far from being rigid and standardised, is richly variegated. This article has also acknowledged that the use of ermine spots has acquired a position of particular symbolic importance for the people of Brittany and Cologne. For me, it has been interesting to discover the extent to which the ermine spot, a heraldic feature which I initially recognised on the flags of Girton College, Brittany and the three English counties, has entered into vexillological usage across Europe. Albeit heraldic in focus, the use of the ermine spot as an impulse for my research has additionally initiated my discovery of an array of flags which, if I had not settled on writing this article, I may never have encountered. □

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Kvääniflaku - A flag for 'the invisible people'

Bjarge Schwenke Fors

All over Norway, a new flag - dark blue with a yellow sunflower - has appeared. This is *Kvääniflaku*, the flag of the Kven people. The Kvens have often been described as 'the invisible people'. Until recently, many Norwegians were not even aware of their existence. Now, thanks to the new flag and the way it is used, the Kvens are becoming more visible.

The Kvens (kven: *kväänit*; Norwegian: *kvener*) are a Finno-Ugric ethnic group living in the coastal regions of Northern Norway as well as in parts of Northern Sweden and Finland. In Norway they have sometimes been referred to as Norwegian Finns. The Kvens in Norway are descendants of immigrants from Finland and Sweden who arrived during the 18th and 19th centuries.

In 1875, the Kvens comprised more than 20 percent of the population of Finnmark, Norway's northernmost county.¹ Since then, the number of Kvens has been declining, much due to the process of *Norwegianisation*, a policy of the late 19th and early 20th century aiming to assimilate ethnic minorities of the North into a culturally homogenous Norwegian population.

The number of Kvens today is difficult to assess, as there is no official census and no official definition of who the Kvens are. Estimates range from 10,000 to 60,000 people. The Kvens have their own language, similar to, but still different from, Finnish. The number of speakers is estimated to be between 2,000 and 8,000.²

National minority

Since the 1980s, a modest revitalisation of Kven culture and language has been taking place. In 1998, the Kvens were officially recognised as a national minority with a long-standing attachment to the country. In 2005, Kven was formally given



1. *Kvääniflaku*. The flag of the Kven people.

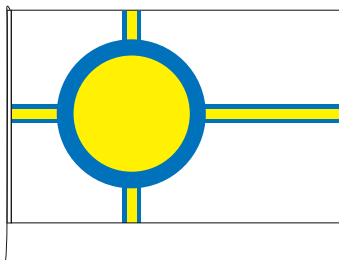
the status of a minority language in Norway.

Still, the Kvens have faced difficulties. One challenge has been internal division. There has been a debate within the community about whether the Kvens should be regarded as an ethnic group of their own or as 'Norwegian Finns'. Furthermore, there has been disagreement regarding the status of the language. Some have argued that the Kven language is merely a dialect of Finnish, not a separate language. For the last twenty years, there have been two competing Kven organisations, sometimes openly fighting each other. Secondly, the Kvens have been rather 'invisible'.

Unlike the Sámi people, the other traditional minority of Northern Norway, the Kvens have lacked commonly recognised symbols. For outsiders it has been difficult to discern any difference between Kvens and Norwegians.³ The introduction of a Kven flag has been seen as a

means for strengthening the unity of the group as well as for making the Kvens more visible.

The first ever proposal for a Kven flag was presented in 1996 by the Kven artist Jens Stark: a white field, a narrow Nordic cross with even narrower blue borders and a yellow circle with a blue border placed over the intersection of the arms of the cross (see *illustration 2*).⁴ At the time, the proposal was not met with enthusiasm. A flag was generally regarded as something for nation-states only, and there was a fear among many Kvens that it would be interpreted



2. The first Kven flag proposal (Jens Stark, 1996)

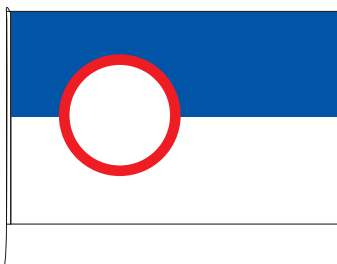
as a sign of separatism.

Gradually, however, the attitudes within the community changed. During the World Congress of Finno-Ugric Peoples in Helsinki in 2000, the Kven delegates were surprised to see that they were in fact the only ethnic group represented without their own flag.⁵ The Kvens were also inspired by the way the Sámi used their flag to gain recognition. The Sámi flag achieved official status in Norway in 2003.

The debate changed from whether to have a flag or not into a debate about *which* flag to adopt. What should it look like? Should it be yet another

Nordic cross flag, or should it contain a circle, like the Sámi flag, and the flag of Greenland? Which colours should be used? Some proposals combined the colours of the flags of Norway, Sweden and Finland, the states where the Kvens

lived. Others took as a starting point the colours of the nature of the Kven areas. In Helge Huru's flag proposal from 2004, which was quite popular, white symbolized the snow, blue the sea and the lakes, and red the midnight sun (*Illustration 3*).



3. Flag proposal (Helge Huru, 2004)

Competition

In 2007, the Kven organisation *Kvenlandsforbundet* arranged a competition for the design of a Kven flag. The most popular flag among 20 proposals was the sunflower flag that we know today simply as the *Kvääniflaku* (Kven) or *Kvenflagget* (Norwegian). The winning flag was created by Bengt Johansson-Kyrö, a resident of Jukkasjärvi in Sweden.

The sunflower motif was chosen due to its prominence in traditional Kven handicraft. The sunflower has been used as decoration on boats, knives, hunting horns, and looms. In the region, the flower is sometimes referred to as *kvenrosa*, the Kven rose.

Kvenlands-forbundet decided to adopt the flag as its symbol. The largest Kven organisation, *Norske kveners forbund - Ruijan kvääniliitto*, did, however, not immediately endorse the flag. Most members were - at least to begin with - reluctant to adopt the flag of their competitor.

Furthermore, many members favoured other flag proposals. Huru's flag was popular, and so was a flag proposed by the local association



4. Flag proposal (Kåfjord Kvenforening/Kaivuonon Kveenseura)

Kåfjord kvenforening/ Kaivuonon Kveenseura that combined elements from the flag of Kvenlands forbundet with that of the Tornedalians (the Kvens' relatives in Sweden), a horizontal tricolor of yellow, white, and blue (*Illustration 4*).

Only on 30 April 2017, after years of internal debate and numerous voting processes, did the organisation approve the flag. At this point, most people were sick and tired of the flag debate and agreed that it was time for a compromise which would result in one flag for all Kvens. People had also by now got quite used to the sunflower flag. Thus, 21 years after Jens Stark first came up with the idea of a Kven flag, it finally became a reality.

Since 2017, there has been a great demand for Kven flags. One flag manufacturer, *Flaggfabrikken*



Showing the Kven flag during the Arctic Race of Norway 2018.
Photo Gyrid Øyen

AS, has sold almost 2000 flags during the last five years.⁶ Flags are now for sale in museums, souvenir shops, and online. Most flags are professionally produced, but a remarkable number are being made by hand. Several so-called 'flag workshops' have been organised, where people - young and old - meet and jointly make their own flags, using many types of materials.

Great demand

The flag is now widely used. As soon as it had been adopted by all Kven organisations, local authorities accepted the flag as a legitimate expression of Kven identity. From 2018, municipalities in the core Kven areas began to fly the flag during the annual Day of the Kvens on 16 March. Later, municipalities in other parts of the country followed. In 2020, the flag was even hoisted outside the Oslo City Hall.⁷

The display of the flag has, however, not been restricted to public flagpoles on particular days of the year. People use the flag all year round in numerous - often ingenious - ways. The flag appears on jackets, t-shirts, hats, mittens, backpacks, buttons, fridge magnets, car stickers, and coffee coasters. There are balcony flags, table flags, hand flags, and miniature flags for cupcakes and Christmas trees. The flag is of course reproduced digitally as well. Activists occasionally raise the flag in unusual contexts, in order to get attention. One such 'flag stunt' recently took place during the Biathlon World Cup in Anterselva in Italy. Along the race track several Kven flags of different sizes had been placed, visible for millions of people following the event on live TV.⁸ (Illustration 5)

The enthusiasm for making the flag and showing it to



5. Knitted mitten with the Kven flag.

the world demonstrates the strong support for it among Kvens, regardless of which organization they belong to and which opinions they have regarding their ethnonym and language. The flag has indeed become a unifying symbol, perhaps the most unifying symbol for the Norwegian Kvens. The flag has also clearly made the Kvens more visible, both in Northern Norway and beyond.

In the North, the extensive use of the flag serves to emphasise the Kven identity of the region. In other parts of the country, where the Kvens have been less present, the use of the flag has a pedagogical effect, in the sense that it informs people about their very existence.

Everything considered, the case of the Kven flag illustrates how a flag under the right conditions can be an important tool for ethnic groups, particularly those who are small and invisible. In Norway, the Kvens have succeeded in using the flag to gain attention as well as recognition. □

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Unofficial Snake flag from 1766 became a symbol of past slavery

Martinique officially adopts separatists' flag

Jo Spalburg

On 2 February 2023, the French overseas department and region of Martinique adopted a new flag to represent the island state at cultural and sporting events, replacing the flag introduced in 2019. This is another chapter in the turbulent history of the flag of the Caribbean island, as the new flag is the preferred symbol of Martinican separatists and independence activists.



1. The Red-green-black flag of Martinique.

The new flag of Martinique consists of a red equilateral triangle placed over two equal horizontal stripes of green and black. This flag, which has been referred to as the rouge-vert-noir (red-green-black) flag for decades, has been 'upgraded' to the official island flag by the CTM, *Collectivité Territoriale de Martinique*, the regional authority. (Illustration 1)

Since the flag became the symbol of Martinican separatists and independence movements in the 1960s, the French island has had several unofficial, semi-official, and briefly also an official flag.



2. Le Tricolore, national flag of France.

Because the island is an integral part of the Republic of France, the French national flag (a.k.a. the Tricolore) is always flown alongside the flag of Martinique. (Illustration 2)

The CTM has its own flag with a stylised logo of the island map, representing a hummingbird. (See box *The Local Authority (CTM) Flag*.)

The Snake flag

The best known and oldest flag of Martinique is the so-called Snake flag (i.e. *Drapeaux aux 4-serpents*), a blue flag with a white cross of Saint Michael, with the image of a white fer-de-lance viper (*Bothrops lanceolatus*), in every canton. (Illustration 3)



3. The Snake flag.

The use of an azure blue flag with white cross and similar ensigns were common in the France of the Ancien Régime when almost all regiments used this cross on their colours, with varied coloured cantons, and sometimes accompanied by distinctive symbols. A well-known example of this flag from that time still in use to-day is the flag of the Canadian province of Québec. (Illustration 4)



4. Le Fleurdelisé, flag of Québec.

The Snake flag was first used by royal French colonial forces stationed in Martinique and by French merchant ships sailing the Caribbean in the 18th century. According to an edict issued 4 August 1766, all vessels of the French colony of Martinique and Saint Lucia should fly a version of the French ensign—which at the time was a white cross on a blue field—with L-shaped (for Lucia) snakes in each quarter of the cross. The same design was used for the colony's lesser coat of arms.³

Note: Saint Lucia, the island south of Martinique, was French territory at the time of the introduction of the flag, subsequently changing hands many times with the British, before gaining independence on 22 February 1979.

Colonial history and symbolism

The Snake flag was used by French navy and merchant ships during the slave trade to Martinique and other French overseas territories in the 'New World'. Some historians claim that the snakes in the flag refer to the snakes in the coat of arms of Jean-Baptiste Colbert,⁴ the author of the infamous *Code Noir*, which was established in 1685 by decree of King Louis XIV (a.k.a. Louis the Great or the Sun King). The *Code Noir*, which regulated the slave trade and the handling of African slaves and their descendants, remained in force until the abolition of slavery in 1848.

The Local Authority (CTM) Flag

On 1 August 2016, a design competition for a new logo for the Collectivity was opened to all adults living in Martinique.¹ Out of 647 eligible proposals, the design of 22-year-old graphic artist Stévy Desbonnes was selected.² The logo features a hummingbird whose wings form a stylized map of Martinique. The colour ochre represents the local soil, and blue represents the ocean. In late 2016 the local government flag was created, consisting of the new logo on a white background.



Other sources believe that the snakes represent the *fer-de-lance*⁵, the Martinican pit viper or lance-head, a species of pit viper endemic to Martinique, prevalent before the French took possession of the island in 1635. This poisonous and aggressive snake seems to have made quite an impression, because they were mentioned by all the writers of that time.

The Snake flag became the symbol of both islands and the design also served as the coat of arms for Martinique, in the absence of any other local symbol. As was customary for the use of flags and coat of arms of the (former) French provinces of that time, they were traditionally flown but had no legal status. This did not prevent some official institutions from using them, both in Martinique and in many other regions of France.³

Although the Snake flag was never officially adopted and was officially replaced when the *Tricolore* became the national flag of the French Republic in 1790, it served until the beginning of the 21st century to represent Martinique, both locally, nationally and internationally, especially during cultural and sporting events. Furthermore, the Snake emblem and coat of arms were used by the Gendarmerie and local police on the island.⁶

Colonial legacy and controversy

Over time, several groups of the local population and among the French Antillean population in mainland France increasingly linked the Snake flag with the slave past of Martinique and the role played in it by France. It was especially opposed by CRAN (*Conseil Représentatif des Associations Noires de France*), the so-called Black Council of France, which presented various petitions in 2017 and campaigned actively against the use of the Snake flag.⁷ For example, in July 2018 Jean-Philippe Nilor, the Martinican member of the French parliament, demanded that the Snake flag and emblem be abolished for public use as it would be against article 17 of the constitution, and in a clear reference to the Holocaust, even compared that flag with the swastika.⁸

At the same time, other Martinicans claimed that the emblem was never historically glorified, or ever even symbolized slavery.⁹ Before the 21st century, the Snake flag remained largely unused in Martinique. It

5. The Snake flag was used as a courtesy flag by many yacht owners who visited Martinique.



was mainly used (and continues to be used) as a sign of courtesy by yachts and sailboats, as well as cruise ships, which visit the island.¹⁰ But anyone who wanted to buy one came away disappointed, because it was not for sale anywhere on the island. (*Illustration 5*)

Following a protest by the local branch of the *Mouvement International pour les Réparations*, when the current French president Emanuel Macron visited Martinique in 2018, he was questioned by the Martinican blogger Victor Monlouis Bonnaire of the online magazine *Makacla.com* on the subject of the Snake flag as a symbol of slavery or colonialism. At the time, Macron showed his ignorance about the subject; however, on 6 July 2018, the French president announced that, in order ‘to calm matters down’, he had decided to remove the snake emblem of the uniforms of the Gendarmerie and other national forces based in Martinique.¹¹

Origin Pan-African flag and its colours

The rouge-vert-noir flag has been used in Martinique since the late 1960s by various independence movements and political parties (although not by the *Mouvement Indépendantiste Martiniquais*, MIM, created in 1978).¹² The red, green and black correspond to the colours of the Pan-African flag adopted in 1920 by Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA-ACL). This movement was founded by Marcus Garvey on 15 July 1914, just before the outbreak of the First World War. Garvey, born in Jamaica, fought for equal rights for black people in the United States. (*Illustration 6*) According to Alex Ferdinand of the MIM, who distanced himself from Garvey’s movement, the red of



6. The Pan-African flag.

the flag of Martinique symbolises socialism, the black the black population and their struggle, and the green the Martinican countryside.¹²

But another political leader, Garcin Malsa, during his term as mayor of Sainte-Anne and leader of the independence movement MODEMAS (i.e. *Mouvement des démocrates et écologistes pour une Martinique souveraine*), maintains the red is a reference to the struggle of both the indigenous people and escaped slaves (once called Maroons – *nègres marrons*), green is for hope and the local fertile soil, and black for the African origins manifested in the Creole culture of Martinique.¹²

Note: the pan-African flag (also called Afro-American flag or Black Liberation flag) has a number of derived flags, such as the national flags of Kenya, Libya, Malawi and South Sudan and it has also inspired other black freedom movements.

The red-green-black flag

According to popular tradition in the French Antilles, the red-green-black flag was already used in the 17th century during the slave uprisings of 1665 led by Francis Abulé, a maroon who fought with the indigenous Kalinago people against the French colonists. The flag would have been used in 1801 during the uprising of Jean Kina in the Carbet region of Martinique, and again in 1870 during the great uprising in the south of the island, when the rebels’ red, green and black scarves or headscarves marked them out in their fight against the French.

In the 1960s, the colours were again embraced by Martinique’s anti-colonial youth movement, the *Organisation de la Jeunesse Anticolonialiste de la Martinique* (OJAM). It placed the colours according to the model of the French Tricolore, in three vertical stripes. The OJAM placed these flags on the walls of the fortress of Fort-de-France, to protest against the

annexation of Martinique as a department of France.¹³ According to OJAM, the first rouge-vert-noir flag with horizontal stripes was also used by Victor Totor-Lessort during his stay in prison in 1963 as a punishment for the Fort-de-France protest.

The red-green-black flag in its present form for the first time in the 1960s by several other persons and organisations. Guy Cabort Masson, who claims he designed the flag together with Alex Ferdinand, used it during the student uprising in Paris in May 1968. From 1971 the flag appeared in Martinique.¹⁴

This red-green-black flag was also taken over by the *Partie Populiste de Martinique* (PPM), and covered the coffin at the funeral of its founder, Aimé Césaire, in

2008.¹⁵ He was also the founder of the worldwide *Négritude* movement, a framework of critique and literary theory, developed during the 1930s mainly by francophone intellectuals, writers, and politicians of the African diaspora, aimed at raising and cultivating



7. The flag of MIM, defunct independence party.

'Black consciousness' across Africa and its Diaspora. From the end of the 21th century and the beginning of the 21st century, the red-green-black flag became the symbol of separatists and advocates of independence for Martinique. The flag repeatedly appeared during political demonstrations and trade union activities, without the approval of the independence movements who claimed it as their own.¹² The mayor of Sainte-Anne ordered that the red-green-black flag should fly from the town hall (*Illustration 8*). However, it was ruled in 2005 that it should be taken down, as it was a violation of the principle of neutrality of public services.

For example, the red-green-black flag was used as a political weapon in various actions since the late 1980s, leading to a veritable local flag war which continued until 2019.¹⁶ (*Illustration 9*)

The Ipséité flag

In 2018, the CTM launched a competition to create a flag and anthem to represent Martinique at regional and international sporting and cultural events.¹⁷ It was

mainly an attempt to replace the now-discredited Snake flag. The national anthem *Lorizon* (composed by Rosetta Varasse) and the so-called 'Ipséité' flag (a word meaning 'personal identity' or 'selfhood') were proposed by the President of the Council of Martinique, Alfred Marie-Jeanne. They were officially adopted and presented on 10 May 2019.¹⁸ (*Illustration 7*)

The flag, designed by Johnny Vigné, has a queen conch (*Aliger gigas*, known locally as a *lambi*) in the middle, a symbolic shell that is used in the (French) Caribbean as a traditional musical instrument. Around the centre piece there are 34 stars, which stand for the



8. The red-green-black flag of Martinique next to the national flag of France at the municipality of Sainte-Anne.

34 municipalities of Martinique. The flag is divided into eight equal segments, representing the eight languages spoken on the island - in addition to French, these are French Creole, English, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Chinese and Arabic. The colour blue in the Ipséité flag refers to the Atlantic and the Caribbean Sea, which are separated by Martinique, while green recalls the steep hills and flora of the island.¹⁹

The Ipséité flag was first flown to represent Martinique's football team in May 2019 during their participation in the CONCACAF Gold Cup.²⁰ However, the new official flag of the island was not accepted by a majority of the population and was mainly contested by the followers of the red-green-black flag.²¹

Moreover, this new flag and anthem were annulled



9. The red-green-black flags celebrated in streets of Fort-de-France, Martinique (Feb. 2021).



10. The Ipséité flag.



11. The Hummingbird flag.

>
12. Official flag hoisting ceremony at CTM (31 March 2023)

by the local administrative tribunal on 15 November 2021, because the selection method was not considered to fall within the responsibilities of the CTM Executive. The island's national assembly should have had the last word, and that had not happened.²²

Third flag design competition

After being in charge for nearly 24 years, Alfred Marie-Jeanne of the ruling MIM party lost the elections of January 2021, and relinquished power to the left-wing candidate Serge Letchimy. It was left to the latter to find a solution to the regional flag and anthem issue, and in June 2022 a commission was set up to organise a new regional competition.²³

On 27 October 2022 the Regional Assembly announced that a new design competition for a flag and anthem for Martinique would be launched.²⁴ The winners would receive a prize of 8,000 Euros and entries for the regional flag and anthem had to be submitted between 7 November and 2 December 2022. However, the process was compromised after the website in question was hacked and had to be relaunched during the first week of January 2023 after being offline for weeks.²⁵

The turnout for the first phase, which narrowed down the choice of about 20 designs to two options, was very low, with only 19,084 votes for a flag and 9,294 for the national anthem from an eligible population of around 300,000. During the second round of voting, turnout remained low, with a total of 26,633 votes for a flag and 10,289 votes for an anthem. On 16 January 2023, the winners were finally announced at a press conference at the Regional Museum of History and Ethnography of Martinique. For the flag, it was Design 242, the Hummingbird flag,

and for the regional anthem, Proposal 298, called *Ansanm* ('together' in French Creole) that were selected.²⁶ (Illustration 8)

However, the designer of the winning Hummingbird flag, Anaïs Delwaulle, was criticized and harassed on social media. Some condemned the hummingbird as a *doudoudouist* symbol, a term utilised in French-Antillean literature that in this context infers a tropical postcard cliché. On the other hand, many on Facebook and Twitter questioned the selection process. The vote had taken place online, which was not considered safe. The process was not fully democratic because, according to Myriam Moïse of the *Fabrique décoloniale*, an association of Martinican intellectuals in Fort-de-France, there had been many technical problems, and it is not certain that only Martinicans voted. In fact, so few people voted, about 35,000 people, or ten percent of Martinique's population, that it undermined the competition's legitimacy.²⁷

Moreover, the flag designer was accused of plagiarism. It appeared from articles in the local press that the design of the Hummingbird flag was copied from an image from Shutterstock, which sells copyright images.²⁸

Further research showed that the flag was not original at all as claimed by the designer, proved by video footage of the carnival parade in 2019, showing that the Hummingbird flag was carried by the *Ma Dous' Siwo* cultural association.

Although Anaïs Delwaulle initially defended her use of the stock image and her design in general²⁹, she announced on 23 January 2023 that she would withdraw her entry, after she had received several threats.³⁰



The president of the selection committee therefore accepted the withdrawal of the winning design and explained that the runner-up, Design 891, the red-green-black flag would be presented to the regional assembly during the upcoming session. Subsequently, on 2 February 2023, with 44 votes in favour and only one abstention, the familiar rouge-vert-noir flag was adopted as the official flag of the island of Martinique.³¹

Conclusion, or continued controversy?

Now that an official flag has been established for Martinique, the question is whether the flag issue is settled, and whether the newly adopted red-green-black flag will be flown and accepted by the majority of the population of Martinique. The jury remains out after the official flag raising ceremony by Serge Letchimy on 31 March this year.³² (*Illustration 12*)

After all, the *rouge-vert-noir* flag is still the symbol of the separatists and independence movements of Martinique, while the great majority of the population (at least for the time being) wants to remain part of France.

In any case, Martinique has made history with this unique flag saga as one of the most controversial national symbols in the Caribbean. It is difficult to imagine a similar scenario or that history will repeat itself, not even in the other French overseas territory of Guadeloupe, which, despite a history parallel to that of Martinique, has yet to select a flag to represent the island. □

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The Venetian lion lived on in flags of the self-governing Ionian Islands (1797-1864)

Stratis Andreadis and Jos Poels FF *

The modern Greek Ionian Islands, also known as the Seven Islands - Corfu, Paxos, Lefkada or Santa Maura, Cephalonia, Ithaca, Zakynthos or Zante, and Kythera - began flying the flags of various occupying powers up until they made a splash in the early and mid-19th century with their own designs. The story of the flags of the Seven Islands is the story of regional powers, their rise and fall, the Ionian Islands' independence and their current subsuming into Greece.

Flags of note appear in the history of the Seven Islands somewhere in the middle to late part of the Late Middle Ages. Venice controlled the islands from 1386 before taking sovereignty in 1401, when the islands voluntarily acceded to the Most Serene Republic of Venice, or *La Serenissima*.

In its heyday Venice, in north-eastern Italy, was a vast, powerful maritime nation. (*Illustration 1*) Its territory comprised islands in the lagoon of Venice, known as *La Dogado*, mainland territories, the *Terraferma*, and overseas territories, the *Stato da Mar*. This last State of the Sea, extended from the eastern shores of the Adriatic Sea to the Ionian Sea, Crete and islands in the Aegean Archipelago. The Serenissima flew the (burgundy) red flag with the golden winged Venetian lion, the Lion of Saint Mark. (*Illustrations 2a and 2b*)

Prior to this, the Seven Islands had been ruled in historical times by, variously, the Liburnians, Corinthians, Corfiots, Epirots, Romans, Byzantines, Normans and, most recently, the Angevin Kingdom of Naples. They also experienced some short-lived periods of occupation. During the Venetian Era, lasting over four centuries, the islands had been ruled by Venetian appointees'

and a Communal Council (*Consiglio della Comunità*) drawn from a local aristocracy.

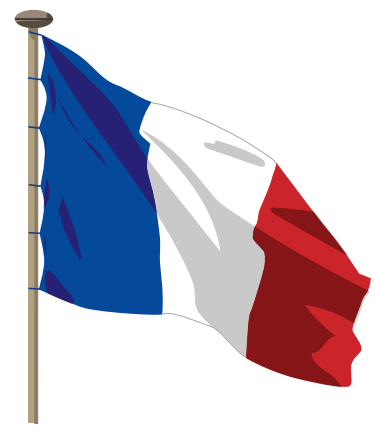
In spring 1796, Napoleon Bonaparte broke *La Serenissima*. In pursuit of the Austrians, Napoleon's army crossed Venice's frontiers and invaded *Terraferma*, the Venetian territories in Italy. A year later, with the *Treaty of Leoben*, France assigned Venice to Austria, in exchange for disputed areas elsewhere in Europe, especially of what nowadays is Belgium.



The seven Ionian Islands within present day Greece.



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2a, 2b. Venice merchant flag (left) and war flag (right) according to Carel Alland in the *Nieuwe Hollandse Scheepsbouw*, 1695.



>
3. On 7 October 1797 the French *département Corcyre* was created. The tricolore became the flag of the islands.

The ownership of the Ionian Islands was not part of the Leoben Peace Treaty. At least, that was how Napoleon wished it. A mixed French-Venetian fleet under command of the French divisional general Antoine Gentili sailed on 13 June 1797 from Venice to take possession of the seven Ionian Islands, of which Corfu was the capital. The ships flew the Venetian flag of St Mark, since Gentili acted as the representative of the new, pro-French Provisional Municipality of Venice. The expedition intended to avoid possible secession of the colony. However, Napoleon had instructed Gentili to encourage the local inhabitants to pursue independence: 'You will make every effort to win the sympathy of the people there, as you will have to govern them. If the people there are willing to stand up

for their independence, you have fulfilled their wish', wrote Napoleon in his instructions.² The fleet arrived in Corfu on 27 June. On 5 July, the Freedom Tree was planted on the island.

The strategically important Ionian Islands were incorporated into France and, on 17 October 1797, under the Treaty of *Campo Formio*, became the *département Corcyre*. Article 5 of the Treaty stipulated:

'His Majesty the Emperor, King of Hungary and of Bohemia, consents that the French Republic should possess in complete sovereignty the former Venetian Islands of the Levant, to wit: Corfu, Zante, Cephalonia, Santa Maura, Cerigo, and other islands dependent upon them, as well as Butrinto, Arta, Vonizza, and in general all the former Venetian establishments in Albania, which are situated below the Gulf of Drin.'



1. The extent of the Most Serene Republic of Venice, or *La Serenissima*.

The French tricolore became the flag of the new department of *Corcyre*. (*Illustration 3*) France used the Ionian Islands as a steppingstone for its invasion of Egypt, which was at that time a vassal state of the Ottoman Empire (Turkey). The French hostilities forced the Ottoman Empire into an anti-French coalition with the Russian Empire. In 1798 and 1799 a combined Ottoman-Russian fleet under Admiral Ushakov captured the Ionian Islands one by one from the French. In a convention concluded in Constantinople on 21 March 1800 the Ottoman and Russian Empires agreed that the Ionian Islands were to become a

republic under the protection of Turkey, a move welcomed by the United Kingdom, which was also fighting the French. The convention provided for a flag.

'Article VI: The merchants and captains in the islands having for a long time had permission to navigate in the Black Sea, the two high contracting parties have agreed that this permission shall be confirmed to them in future, solely under their own flag; and this object shall be accomplished in the manner prescribed.'

Two Dutch newspapers mentioned the birth of the new republic in their editions of Saturday, 5 July 1800.³ The news came from their correspondent in Venice, obviously the same person, as the brief articles were almost identical and described the flag of what was called the 'former Venetian islands' in the same way:

'The Flag of the republic will display St Mark with a long Beard; and on a green Field carry various Symbols, alluding to the number of her Islands: Its Flag shall be respected by the Barbarian Powers, and favoured in the Ports of Turkey.'

The breaking news in the French-sponsored Batavian Republic about the flag of the new republic might have been premature. The fate of the Ionian flag was not determined in Venice, but in Constantinople.

In a letter to the Sublime Porte and the Russian Empire, dated 23 September 1799, the Senate of the Seven Islands presented seven requests for their new state. Five of them related to the creation of a flag for the new state and the importance of the flags' recognition as a state flag to be flown on merchant ships.⁴ For a republic made up of islands, a visible symbol of its independence at sea was of vital importance.⁵ The question now arose as to what this flag would look like. As a practical matter, the islanders had flown the Lion of St. Mark for four centuries and the French *tricolore* for three.

Naturally then, as a matter of continuity, the new flag should contain the Lion of St Mark. However, this was not a straightforward process,

there were serious objections. These were raised by the Senate of the Ionian Islands which had split into two factions. The minority, a more liberal faction, requested that the symbol of the new state be a phoenix rising from its ashes.⁶ The majority, a faction composed of conservative aristocrats, objected to the Lion as it stirred what they called, bad memories,⁷ presumably of life under *La Serenissima*.⁸ Despite the objections of the Senate, the Porte succeeded in having the Lion as the symbol of the *Septinsular Republic*.

Having reached an agreement that the flag would contain the Lion of St Mark, the plenipotentiaries turned to the smaller symbols on the flag. This being a new state, adjustments needed to be made to show the 'who, what', and 'when' of this new state. The last issue was almost the easiest. The Senate proposed that the Lion should have a scroll above its paws with the date of the state's founding, i.e. 1800. The Sublime Porte requested that the date ١٢١٤ in the *Anno Hegirae*, the Islamic year 1214 (corresponding to 1800 in the Gregorian calendar) be placed as well, in the canton. The Russian Empire⁹ proposed that the date in the *Anno Hegirae* be placed in the top left side of the canton, a proposal that would prove extremely useful to the islanders.

This was to be a republic of seven islands, so there should be seven identical symbols. The Senate proposed seven arrows. The Porte agreed to their request while stipulating that the arrows should be spread out, to make sure that they didn't look like the French fasces¹⁰ A universal dislike of the French was something all parties could agree on. The flag now had a sash and seven spread-out arrows.

Next was religion which had to be represented. This was somewhat of a delicate matter, for religion was the cause of quite a few scuffles in this part of the Mediterranean over the centuries. Specifically, two issues needed to be solved in the flag design. Firstly, the Sublime Porte, a Muslim state, was to be suzerain over a Christian state.¹¹ Christian symbolism could be displayed but without pomp.

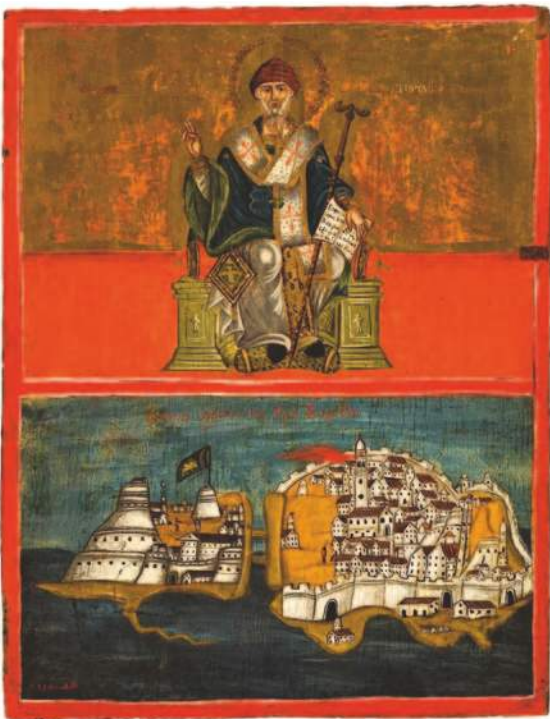
Secondly, an intra-Christian issue, a much more



4. The official flag of the Septinsular Republic was presented on 13 October 1800, and had the consent of the Ottoman Grand Vizier and the Russian Empire. (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul. Hatt-ı Hümayun Kataloğu (HAT 175/7601)



5. A rare and faded flag of the Septinsular Republic on display behind glass in the Regional Museum of Koper, Slovenia. (Inventory no. 1532; dimensions: 65x117cm; painted on textile)



6. Detail from the icon of St Spyridon and his miracle in Kerkyra, painted by G. Aspiolis during the years of the Septinsular Republic. It depicts an incident from 1715, but it shows the flag adopted in 1800, without the red border.

controversial issue, needed to be settled. The issue was this: Venice had downgraded Orthodox Christian clergy on the islands and had given prominence to the Catholic clergy ever since they took over in 1386. As most of the population was Christian Orthodox it stood to reason that now that *La Serenissima* was out of the picture, this ecclesiastical affront to the majority of the seven islands' population should be amended in the flag. This was done by closing the book on the Catholics, literally. The Lion of St Mark held an open book with the words *Pax Tibi Marce Evangelista Meus* (Peace be unto you Mark my Evangelist) written on the open pages. Latin was (of course) the language of the Catholic Church. So, the Senate proposed closing the book. The Lion now held a closed book with a cross on it, showing that the book was a Christian book but for those who remembered the open book with Latin writing, it most certainly meant that this was no longer a Catholic state.

Colours were the penultimate part of the puzzle. The yellow (gold) of the lion was not an issue. However, the traditional red field of the flag of St Mark was an issue, as was the use of the colour green. Both colours were Islamic colours and therefore not suitable for a Christian state. Therefore, blue became the obvious candidate as colour for the flag's field. Blue also served as a nod to the insular nature of the new republic.¹²

The last part was a border. To make sure that suzerainty was properly displayed the Porte insisted that the blue field would have a red border. At that time red was the main colour in nearly all Ottoman flags.

The flag was now complete. Inside the red border at the top left of the canton, the *Anno Hegirae* year 1214 (presumably in yellow) was written. Within the red border there is a blue field with the Lion of St Mark holding a closed book with a Christian cross¹³ on it and seven splayed out arrows held together by a sash bearing the year 1800. The Porte now had a flag to show that, with a red border and the *Anno Hegirae*, this new state was suzerain to them and that it owned part of a former enemy's territory.

The Russians waived the presence of the *Anno Hegirae* and along with everyone else, were happy



7. *Prospetto Generale delle Bandiere che Si Alberano a Bordo dei Bastimenti di Guerra, a Mercantili di Tutte le Nazioni all' epoca del Pmo Genro, 1804.*



8. *Tavola dimostrativa delle bandiere che s' inalberano a bordo de' bastimenti da guerra e mercantile di tutti le nazioi, c.1805.*

the flag did not show any reference to the French. Probably the biggest winners of all were the conservative aristocrats of the Senate who received a flag and a form of government that suggested a continuity of the power they held under the rule of Venice. Such was the official flag of the Septinsular Republic. (*Illustration 4*)

This official flag was not flown before 13 October 1800, the day the flag was presented by the Grand Vizier to the plenipotentiaries of the Septinsular Republic and blessed by the Patriarch of Constantinople. But of the surviving flags or paintings of the period show a flag with a red border and the *Anno Hegirae*. All examples of the period curiously omit the red border and all it contained. (*Illustrations 5 and 6*) Legend has it that the border was ripped off before it arrived in Corfu. The flag we have today, the flag that is known as the flag of the Septinsular Republic, consists of a blue field with the Lion of St Mark. All the little compromises surrounding the lion and its symbols now tell the story of how two empires and the representatives of a nascent state came together to design a flag that fit competing interests, histories, religions and hopes.

Flag charts

The official flag of the Septinsular Republic can be found on rare flag charts of the first decade of the



9. *Tabell öfver alla Nationers nu brukliga Flaggor, 1805.*

nineteenth century, when Europe was in turmoil and many new states and flags appeared and disappeared. There are, however, at least four flag charts known - three Italian and one Swedish. The first one, the oldest, is the Italian flag chart *Prospetto Generale delle Bandiere che Si Alberano a Bordo dei Bastimenti di Guerra, a Mercantili di Tutte le Nazioni all' epoca del Pmo Genro 1804*.¹⁴ (*Illustration 7*) It is a hand-coloured engraved plate by Vincenzo Vieller (engraver) and Vincenzo Scotti (artist). The flag is the old blue Venetian flag with Saint Mark's lion with the whole having a red border.

Two other flag charts, dated or assumed from 1805, have the same flag for the Ionian Islands as the *Prospetto Generale delle Bandiere*. The first one is by Benedetto Chiesa in Livorno who

published the *Tavola dimostrativa delle bandiere che s' inalberano a bordo de' bastimenti da guerra e mercantile di tutti le nazioi* (Illustration 8) The artist/engraver shows the flag together with a blue pennant with probably a golden St Mark's lion. The caption of the flag stated: 'This [flag] was ordered in 1800'.¹⁵

The Swedish flag chart *Tabell öfver alla Nationers nu brukliga Flaggor* from 1805, engraved by artist E. Åkerlund and most likely published in Göteborg has also an old blue Venetian flag with a small red border on all sides.¹⁶ (Illustration 9)

In vexillological circles there has long been uncertainty about the 1800-flag of the Republic of the Seven United Islands. It was long thought that this first Ionian flag did not have a red border. It was the Italian vexillologist Aldo Ziggio who in 1983 drew attention to the fact that the Ionian flag on the 1804 *Prospetto Generale* did have a red border.¹⁷

Today it is established that the flag of the Septinsular Republic *de jure* had a red border, but *de facto* this was not used.¹⁸

French again

France and its allies, Spain and the Batavian Republic (the Netherlands) on one side and the United Kingdom on the other side, signed on 27 March 1802 the *Treaty of Amiens*. Article 9 of the Treaty which ended nearly nine years of war, stipulated: 'The Republic of the Seven Islands is hereby acknowledged.' It looked like France had given up on the strategically important islands.

The new Island nation drew up a constitution, which was promulgated on 18 (30 new calendar) November 1803. This *Constitution of the Septinsular Republic* made no references about the national flag or other state symbols. The cover of the Constitution, however, showed Saint Mark's lion. (Illustration 10)

The Peace between the United Kingdom and France concluded in 1802 did not last long. London and Paris argued over the Peace of Amiens and neither side kept the terms of the treaty. Britain ended the truce on 18 May 1806 by declaring war on Napoleon. This act eventually would have consequences for the Ionian Islands.



10. Cover of the Constitution of the Septinsular Republic, promulgated 18 (30 new calendar) November 1803 showed Saint Mark's lion.

On 11 April 1806, Napoleon ordered his brother Joseph, King of Naples, to confiscate all ships carrying the flag of the Ionian Islands in his kingdom and expel all Ionian commissioners of the island republic.¹⁹

On 7 July 1807, Napoleon and the Russian Emperor Alexander I signed the Treaty of Tilsit on a raft in the middle of the Neman River. In Secret Clause 2 the fate of the Ionian Islands was determined: 'The Seven Islands shall be possessed in complete proprietorship and sovereignty by His Majesty the Emperor Napoleon.' Russia withdrew its protection over the islands. The Ottoman Empire had already declared war on Russia. A month after the conclusion of the Treaty of Tilsit the French arrived in Corfu and took over from the Russians. Finally, on 1 September 1807 the French general

César Berthier declared the annexation of the Septinsular Republic.

On the day of the annexation, General Berthier issued the *Provisional Organisation*, which decreed: 'The Septinsular Republic is one of the states that depend on the French Empire. The inhabitants of the Seven Isles are subjects of His Majesty the Emperor of the French and King of

forgets ... the most important things, such as the number of Russian troops who are [still] in Corfu...'²¹

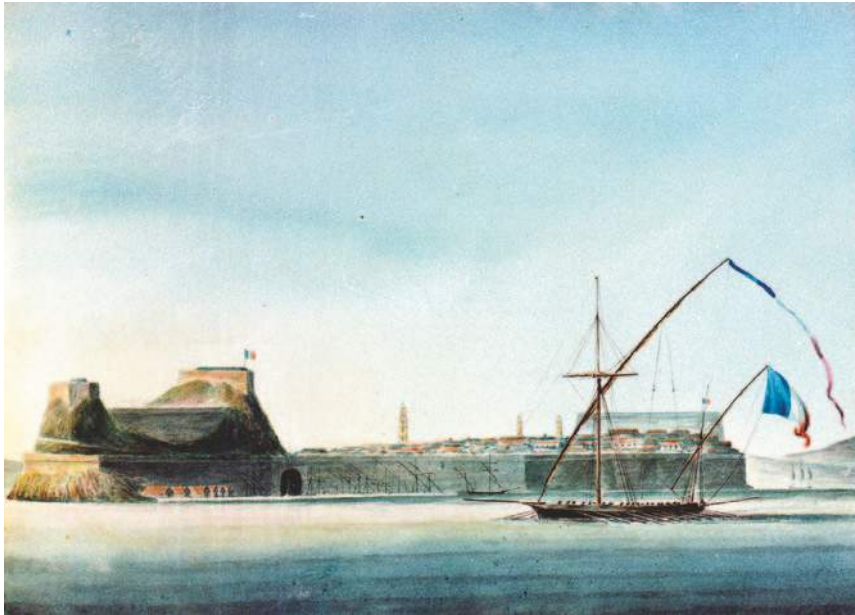
General Berthier's decision to declare the French flag to be that of the Seven Islands was annulled by Napoleon's decree of 10 November 1807, which dealt with the French-Ionian relations.

France let the islands retain their autonomy under a Governor General, in which position General César Berthier was appointed. Article 2 of the Imperial Decree read: 'Nothing has changed in their internal administration, and in their present constitution.'²² As the flag was part of the 'internal administration', this meant the flag with the Venetian lion was not replaced by the French tricolore.

The French *tricolore* was flown on land as well as on ships. This can be seen on a sketch of the east side of the town of Corfu, drawn around March 1812 by British lieutenant William Innes Pocock, who served on HMS *Eagle* in the Adriatic in 1811-1812. (Illustration 11) It is a rare contemporary proof of the use of the tricolore during the French

occupation of the islands.

Great Britain was not happy at all with the French annexation of the Ionian Islands and began a naval blockade of the islands. In October 1809, a British expeditionary force, commanded by Brigadier John Oswald arrived on the island of Zakynthos (Zante). Oswald issued a proclamation promising to give back the Ionian Islands their liberty and independence. The British quickly occupied three other Ionian Islands, installing administrations according to the existing laws. The island of Lefkada (Lefkas) followed in April 1810, Paxos in early 1813 and the town of Parga in March 1814 after a popular uprising. It is not known if local Ionian flags played a role during this 'liberation' of the islands.



11. William Innes Pocock: North East side of the town of Corfu (c. March 1812). National Maritime Museum Greenwich (PAFoo44)

Italy. The arms and the standards of the empire are common to them. All dependent cities of the Septinsular Republic shall retain the present organisation provisionally.'²⁰

The French annexation ended the use of the blue 'Venetian' flag with the red border. But not for long. In Fontainebleau, near Paris, Emperor Napoleon was furious about Berthier's annexation of the Ionian Islands. In a letter dated 6 October 1807 to his brother Joseph, king of Italy, the emperor wrote: I did not instruct General César Berthier to declare that Corfu was part of the Empire, and since I was silent, he must also be silent. Show him my displeasure. He was to declare that the Constitution was preserved on the footing on which it stands. ... General César Berthier was very wrong to fly the French flag. He

Protectorate

Corfu, the main Ionian Island stayed French until the first downfall of Napoleon in early 1814. In June that year the French surrendered Corfu to the British. The Ionian Senate, which had not been abolished or suspended by the French tried to advocate independence for the islands at the Congress of Vienna. The British, however, refused as in their opinion the Septinsular Republic had ceased to exist after the Treaty of Tilsit. Vienna decided, however, to transform the seven islands into a British protectorate, the United States of the Ionian Islands.

On 5 November 1815, the '*Treaty between Great Britain and Austria, Prussia and Russia, respecting the Ionian Islands*' was signed in Paris. Article 7 of this *Treaty of Paris*, as the Treaty is also known, dealt amongst other things with the flag of the British protectorate. It stipulated:

'The trading Flag of the United States of the Ionian Islands shall be acknowledged by all the Contracting Parties as the Flag of a Free and Independent State. It shall carry with the colours and above the armorial bearing thereon displayed before the year 1807²³ such other as His Britannic Majesty may think proper to grant, as a mark of the Protection under which the said Ionian States are placed; and for the more effectual furtherance of this Protection, all the ports and harbours of the said States are hereby declared to be, with respect to Honorary and Military rights, within British jurisdiction.'

The introduction of the flag of the new British protectorate did not have a high priority. It took until 26 August 1817 to promulgate a new constitution for the islands, which should enter into force on 1 January 1818. Section 6 of Chapter VI of the *Constitutional Chart of the United States of the Ionian Islands*²⁴ dealt with the National Colours and Armorial Bearings. It said:

'Article 1: The national commercial flag of the United States of the Ionian Islands, as directed by the seventh article of the treaty of Paris, shall be the original flag of these States, with the addition of the

British Union [sic], to be placed in the upper corner, next to the flag-staff.

2. On usual days, the British colours shall be hoisted on all the forts within the United States of the Ionian Islands, but a standard shall be made, to be hoisted on days of public rejoicing and festivity, according to the model of the armorial bearings of the said States.
3. The arms or armorial bearings of the United States of the Ionian Islands shall hereafter consist of the British arms in the centre, surrounded by the arms of each of the islands composing the said States.
4. The armorial bearings of each of the islands shall consist of the individual arms of the islands, and such emblem, denoting the sovereign protection, as may be deemed advisable.

The design of the flag of the United States of the Ionian Islands was basically the old flag of the Septinsular Republic with the addition, in the canton, of the British Union Flag. In the *Gazzetta Jonia*, the Ionian government gazette, dated 9 December 1817, it was notified that the flag would be promulgated on 28 December. It stated:

'It is hereby publicly announced that the Commercial Flag of the United States of the Ionian Islands, as established in the Constitution, will be promulgated on the 28th of this month and becomes effective on New Year's Day, is placed in the Office of Colonel Robinson, where it can be seen and observed by anyone, and this for the purpose, that the various vessels belonging to these States can provide themselves with the same, since they must, after the installation of the New Government, navigate under the same.'²⁵

The notification of the introduction of the new flag came without an illustration, nor with a description. The promulgation of the flag and constitution of the United States of the Ionian Islands took place at the Old Fortress, a Venetian fortress in the old town of Corfu, on 28 December 1817.

Before the British-styled flag for the Ionian Islands came into use, it had been sanctioned by the

Admiralty in London, which in those days was in charge of flag usage and design. A drawing of the new flag was shown to the First Secretary to the Admiralty John Wilson Croker, who returned the draft colours on 11 August 1817.²⁶

It is through contemporary flag charts, books and paintings that we know how the flag of the protected state of the Ionian Islands looked like. All these illustrations speak the same language. (*Illustrations 12, 13 and 14*) The flag is blue with the golden (yellow) winged Lion of Saint Mark, holding the Bible and seven arrows, one for each of the seven Ionian Islands. This old Venetian flag is framed with a narrow border in red. As it was described in the Treaty of Paris and in the Ionian Constitution that the new flag should be the same as the flag of the Septinsular Republic, this is another proof that the flag of the latter did have a red border on all sides. As a sign that the islands were protected by the United Kingdom, the Ionian flag depicted the Union Flag in the canton. The Union Flag in this design was quite new, dating from 1801, when the red saltire was added.

The Union Flag in the flag of the protected Ionian Islands sometimes covers parts of the red border while sometimes it is placed touching the border in the left-hand top corner. This can be seen in an undated watercolour of the brig *Jon-Agneta* of Captain Kiprioli (*Illustration 15*), a rare illustration of the use of the flag.²⁷

The National Historical Museum in Athens keeps in its collection an Ionian flag - dated 1854 - of a design which does not follow the flag charts of those days. (*Illustration 16*) The flag belonged to the ship of Captain Anastasios Babasis from Zakynthos. It was a transport ship during the Crimean War of 1854.²⁸

Greek independence

In 1821 the Greek Revolution broke out. The Greeks wanted to break away from the Ottoman Empire and establish an independent country. The Ionians sympathised heavily with the insurgents on the mainland, but the British High Commissioner kept the islands resolutely neutral. Greece's Independence, as a kingdom, was finally recognised in February 1830 under the London



12. Pavillons des puissances maritimes en 1819. [Paris: c.1820] Plate 26.



13. Luigi Rossi: *Prospetto Generale Delle Bandiere Che Si Inalberano Bordo Dei Bastimenti Di Guerra Mercantili Di Tutte Le Nazioni*. Milan: 1820.



14. Laurie's Collection of the Maritime Flags of All Nations. London: 4 January 1832.

Protocol. Although the United Kingdom, together with France and Russia, guaranteed the independence of Greece, it thought that Greece's independence had nothing to do with the Ionian Islands. In 1858, poet and judge Ioulios Typaldos wrote: 'by the occupation of the Ionian Islands, England secured [...] the exclusive domination of the Mediterranean, the entrance to which she guards by means of Gibraltar, the centre by Malta; and by Corfu she commands its Eastern Coast, Turkey and the Adriatic.'²⁹

Although the unification with Greece was not universally accepted among the Ionians, the Ionian Parliament affirmed in 1848 its wish for unification of the islands with Greece. That year (the European year of Revolutions) also saw insurrections starting on the island of Cephalonia, which were suppressed by the British. The Greek flag played a role in the uprising. Newspaper reports of late 1848 - the year when most of Europe was in turmoil - mention that the leaders of the uprising carried a 'flag in the Greek colours' with them.³⁰

As Lord High Commissioner Extraordinary the British liberal politician William Gladstone was appointed to negotiate the political future of the Ionian Islands. The Classical scholar and later four times prime minister of the United Kingdom recommended that the islands remain a British protectorate. The British refused union with Greece as long as the Bavarian-born king Otto was on the throne in Athens. When Otto, who was regarded unfriendly to the British was deposed in 1862 and replaced by the Anglophile George I, the way to the unification of the Ionian Islands with Greece was paved.

Union with Greece

On 23 September 1863, the Parliament of the Ionian Islands adopted a resolution proclaiming the union of the islands with Greece. This time the British gave in, and on 21 May 1864, by proclamation of the Lord High Commissioner, the islands were united with Greece. For Greece it was the second territorial expansion since the country had become independent. Greek troops arrived on 1 June, and on 'the 2nd the Greek flag was hoisted upon the forts amid great



15. Unknown artist, French school. Jon-Agneta flies an Ionian Flag. The watercolour was made between 1822 and 1864.



16. Flag of the Ionian Islands from 1854, not according to the official design. (National Historic Museum, Athens)

enthusiasm.³¹ With the unification the flag of the Ionian Islands became defunct.

The Ionian Islands (excluding Cythera) still form an administrative region in modern Greece. Cythera, off the south coast of the Peloponnese, is part of the region of Attica. The flags of the Ionian Islands during their short-lived independence and when it was a British protectorate, are only flown by certain institutions (such as the Corfu Chamber of Commerce) and the nascent independence movement. Using some imagination, the 19th century flags live on in the

municipal flag of Corfu. This flag is blue with a red border, the two colours being separated by a yellow fimbriation. In the centre of the flag is the town seal, showing an ancient Greek rudderless sailing ship.³² □

* At the 2022 FIAV Flag Congress in Slovenia, Stratis Andreadis and Jos Poels discovered that they were both researching the flag history of the Ionian Islands but using different sources. Andreadis used Greek sources, which he used in the article 'The flag of the Septinsular Republic', in NAVA's *Vexillum* (No. 13, March 2021); while Poels used British, French and Dutch sources. The authors agreed to marry the research works, which resulted in this article. Both authors are indebted to Theo Stylianides FF for his assistance in the production of this article in all its stages.

Notes

1. The *Provveditore Generale da Mar* ('Superintendent General of the Sea') was a senior officer in the Venetian navy and in the Venetian overseas empire. In Corfu the senior officer was called the Bailo.
2. Moschonas, Nikolaos (1975). *Τα Ιόνια Νησιά κατά την περίοδο 1797-1821* [The Ionian Islands in the period 1797-1821]. *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους, Τόμος ΙΑ*: Ο ελληνοισμός υπό ξένη κυριαρχία, 1669-1821 [History of the Greek Nation, Volume XI: Hellenism under foreign rule, 1669-1821] (in Greek). Athens: Ekdotiki Athinon. pp. 382-402.
3. *Bataafsche Leeuwarder Courant*, Saturday 5 July 1800, p. 1; *De Nieuwe Haagse Nederlandse Courant*, 5 July 1800, p. 1.
4. Request number one was, to paraphrase: To begin with we need, a constitution, and a flag. Nikiforou, A.: *Eptanisos Politeia (1800-1807)* [Επτάνησος Πολιτεία 1800-1807] τα μείζονα πολιτικά ζητήματα. Corfu: G.S.A (General State Archives of Corfu), 2001.
5. One of the requests was for the flag to be respected specifically by the Barbary Pirates of 'Halls of Montezuma' fame.
6. The head of the Senate's delegation in Istanbul, Count Antonio-Maria Capodistrias, rejected the phoenix as it would give the impression that the state would become an independent nation and not, as it actually was, autonomous under Ottoman suzerainty. As an aristocrat, Count Capodistrias was happy to have the Lion as a symbol of the state showing the continuity in power of the aristocrats, French rule notwithstanding. Twenty years later, his son, Count Ioannis Capodistrias, as first Governor of Greece, would choose the phoenix as a Greek symbol on its currency. Conte Ermanno Lunzi: 'Bandiera delle Repubblica', *Delle Repubblica Settinsulare*, libre due. Bologna: 1863, p. 44.
7. 'ignate memorie'. Lunzi, 1863, p. 44.
8. As has been pointed out by Aliko Nikiforou (Nikiforou, 2001), the conservative faction in the Senate who were happiest to have the Lion of St Mark represent them, were the ones who requested that the Lion should not be part of the flag for it brought 'bad memories'. The reason is that the conservative faction assessed that the Sublime Porte would request the Lion of St Mark to be part of the flag. The Porte was happy to be suzerain over a state that bore the symbol of its age-old mortal enemy, Venice. The conservatives didn't want to be the ones who proposed the Lion.
9. This was the Russians' only serious comment on the issue of flag design; they spent all the diplomatic capital on the form of the Septinsular Republic's government.
10. A. Papazoglou: *I Eptanisiaki Politeia sta arheia tou Othomanikou Kratous* [The Septinsular Republic in the archives of the Ottoman State, *H Eptanisiaki Πολιτεία στα αρχεία του Οθωμανικού Κράτους*]. Nea Estia [Νέα Εστία], 15 June 1939, p. 810.
11. It was not a difficult issue, The Republic of Ragusa, on whose government the constitution of the Septinsular Republic was loosely based, was an autonomous state that already payed taxes to the Porte.
12. N.G. Moschonas: 'I Simaia tis Eptanissou Politieias' [The Flag of the Septinsular Republic, Η Σημαία της Επτανήσου Πολιτείας]. In Despina Michalaga, & P. Moschona, *Eptanisos Politeia 1800-1807* [Septinsular Republic 1800-1807, Επτάνησος Πολιτεία 1800-1807] (p. 415). Athens: Kentro Meleton Ioniou [Center for Ionian Studies, Κέντρο Μελετών Ιονίου], 2016.
13. Some scholars believe it to be an Orthodox cross, though the shape does not seem to bear witness to this.
14. The whole flag chart with the flags in use on the 1st of January 1804 can be viewed at: <https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:248132/> (Accessed 15 July 2020)
15. *Tavola dimostrativa delle bandiere che s' inalberano a bordo de' bastimenti da guerra e mercantile di tutti le nazioi* was reprinted in 1974 as no. 8 in a folder labelled *History captured in Flags* (Bussum: De Boer Maritiem) containing 10 flag charts. The flag charts were described and explained by Klaes Sierksma. The Ionian Islands flag is in row 4 at the extreme right. *Tavola dimostrativa delle bandiere* (circa 50 x 65 centimetres) itself is undated.
16. This hand-coloured copper engraving was reprinted as no. 9 in Sierksma's *History captured in Flags* (1974) The Ionian flag is in the third top row, at the extreme left.
17. Aldo Ziggliotto: 'Le carte di bandiere della 'Raccolate Bertarelli' (1)', *Vexilla Italica*, Vol. 10, No. 16, 1983, 15-16.
18. As can be seen on several websites dealing with the history of the Ionian Islands and its flags. Among them the website about the history of Corfu: <https://www.corfuhistory.eu/?p=15047> (Accessed 27 July 2020)
19. Letter, dated 11 April 1806, from Napoleon to his brother Joseph. Reprinted in: *Mémoires du Roi Joseph*, Vol. 2, Paris: Perrotin, 1853, p. 177.
20. Organisation provisoire de 1er septembre 1807, reprinted in: Colonel Bory de Saint-Vincent: *Histoire et description des Iles Ioniennes*. Paris: 1823, p. 295. The Dutch newspaper *Utrechtse Courant* of 21 October 1807 noted on its frontpage, based on a communication from Venice, that the islands will 'carry the same Arms and Flag as France.'
21. '945. Instructions pour l'Occupation des Iles Ioniennes', *Correspondance Militaire de Napoléon Ier*. Vol. 5. Paris: 1876. pp.72-77.
22. Denis Moschopoulos: *Administration publique et idées politiques dans les îles ioniennes pendant la seconde domination Française*. [Doctoral thesis] Paris : 1990. Appendice I, p. 506.
23. The Treaty of Paris is (re)published in several sources. Some of them erroneously mention 1801 instead of 1807, the year the Treaty of Tilsit was concluded. This text of article 7 is taken from: *The Map of Europe by Treaty*, Vol. 1, (London: 1875), pp. 337-341.
24. 'The Constitution ratified by HRH the Prince Regent, in the name and on the behalf of His Majesty, 26 August 1817' in: R.M. Martin: 'Appendix VII - Constitutional chart of the United States of the Ionian Islands', *History of the Colonies of the British Empire*. London, 1834, p. 269.
25. 'Notificazione Ufficio della segreteria del governo', *Gazzetta Jonia*, No. 180, 9 December 1817, p. 2.
26. National Archives, Kew. ADM 359/37B/23. In the letter it is suggested 'that all marine nations should be requested to supply drawings of their national flags for inclusion in a Book of Flags.'
27. In summer 2020, the watercolour (44,8 x 60 centimetres) was for sale at La Gazette Drouot: [gazette-drouot.com/lots/6461936](https://www.gazette-drouot.com/lots/6461936) (Accessed, 17 July 2020). The artist is unknown but supposed to be from the French school. As the *Jon-Agneta* also flies a Greek flag, the watercolour was made between 1822 (Greek independence) and 1864 (Ionian union with Greece).
28. The flag (261 x 105 centimetres) is found at nhmuseum.gr/en/fakelos-sylogon/antikeimena/9906_en/ (Accessed, 20 July 2020)
29. National Archives, Kew. CO 136/161 'Paper by Dr Julius Tipaldo Pretenderi, president of the Tribunal of Zante', attached to a letter from Sir John Young to Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, 14 July 1858.
30. *Curaçoesche Courant* (Curaçao, Dutch Antilles), 30 December 1848, quoting messages received from Athens, dated 22 October 1848.
31. 'The cession of the Ionian Islands', *The Star* (Ballarat, Victoria, Australia), 12 August 1864, p. 1.
32. [crwflags.com/fotw/flags/gr-pw-kk.html](https://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/gr-pw-kk.html) (Accessed, 20 July 2020)

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BARBADOS

Republic of Barbados

Effective from	Flag
30 November 1966	State, Civil, Merchant
Industrial Standard	WIPO
Non-existent	Not informed

Legal Basis

At independence on 30 November 1966, Barbados obtained a flag approved by Queen Elizabeth II, who at that time was Head of State of Barbados. Its design was filed at the College of Arms in London. The flag was the winning design submitted by Grantley W. Prescod in a contest sponsored by the Government.

On 28 April 1969 Governor-General A. Winston Scott assented 'An Act to regulate the use of the *National Emblems and National Anthem of Barbados*'. The Act was published in the Supplement to *The Official Gazette*, Vol. 104, No. 37, 8 May 1969. The design was composed as described in Schedule Section 2, Part II AS:

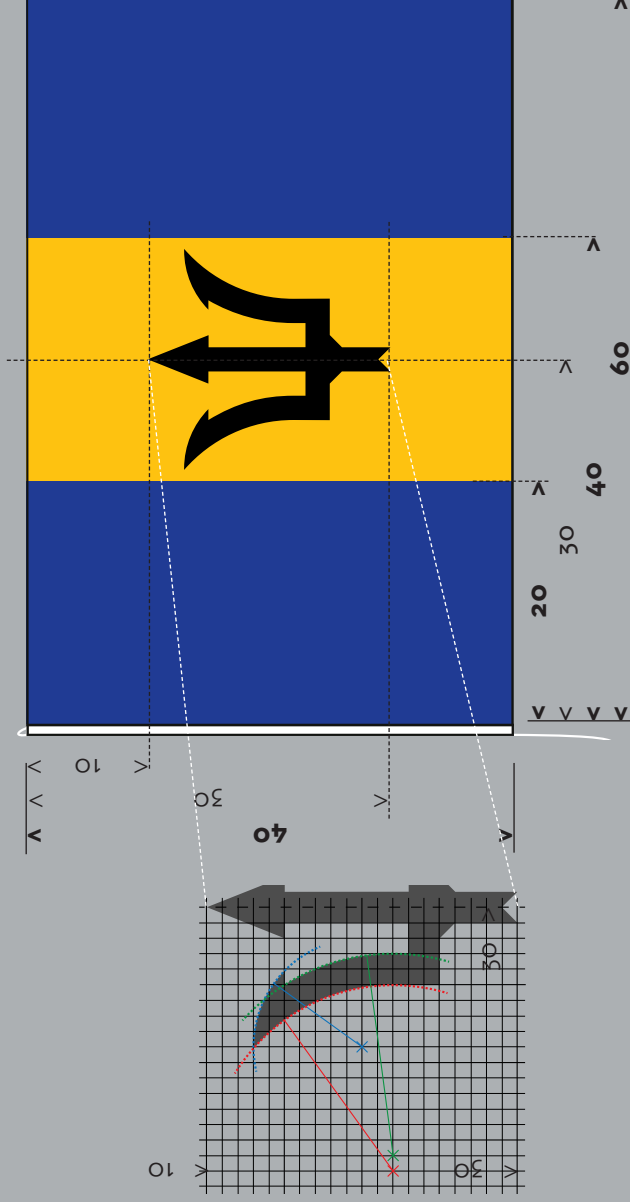
'The Flag is composed of three equal vertical panels - the outer panels of ultramarine and the centre panel of gold. A broken trident in black is in the centre of the flag. The British standard colour code numbers for the colours of the flag are as follows: Ultramarine - BCC 148, Gold - BS 0/002. The flag is designed in the proportion 3:2.'

The flag description stayed unchanged in the '*National Emblems and National Anthem of Barbados (Regulation) Act 1976*', which superseded the 1969 Act, and is still in force as Chapter 300A of the Laws of Barbados. Barbados became a republic on 30 November 2021, when no alterations made to the flag design.

Observations

The colours of the flag are specified in two different colour standards. Ultramarine (blue) according to the (now defunct) *British Colour Council (BCC)*, while gold (yellow) is defined according to the *British Standard (BS)*, which has since superseded BCC.

The design of the trident was legally not further specified. Preparing this sheet, the Flag Institute largely used a drawing of the flag published in the *Flag Research Center's Flag Bulletin*, Vol. 6, No. 1-2, Winter 1966-1967, p. 6, as the most authoritative contemporary sample.



Colour	Blue	Yellow	Black
PMS	2738 C	1235 C	-
BCC	148	-	-
BS	-	0/002	-