

Flags in the Special Collections of Princeton University Library—Part 1



By Steven A. Knowlton

This talk was given at NAVA 58 in St. Paul, Minnesota, in September 2024. It appears in two installments; this is the first. The casual tone represents the tenor of the presentation.

I have the professional privilege of working as a librarian at Princeton University in New Jersey (fig. 1). Being a librarian anywhere is a pretty good gig—it's air-conditioned, you work with your brain instead of your back, you never have to meet a sales quota—but it's especially nice at Princeton because our library contains a wonderland of research materials on every topic conceivable, including flags.

In libraries, we distinguish between general collections and special collections. General collections are those materials that circulate freely, and special collections are kept under guard and can only be used on site, with supervision. Materials are usually housed in special collections if they are rare or fragile.

Princeton has plenty of material about flags in the general collection, of course. In fact, we recently processed a donation of several hundred books from the library of the late David Phillips, who collected widely in vexillology and heraldry.¹ While it is convenient to have them in Princeton, those materials can be found in libraries all around the world. Something a little more special is the fascinating flag material that is quite uncommon and possibly unique, and is found in Princeton's special collections. I don't have a research paper to read today, but I still thought you would like to see a few of these items.

At a few points, I'll be mentioning flags that I can't identify. If you can identify one, please feel free to contact me at steven.knowlton@princeton.edu

Portolan Chart of 1640

Since nautical flags were most important in the development of national flags, let's start there. Perhaps the earliest item with flags that we have is a portolan chart of the

Mediterranean Sea made in 1640 (fig. 2)². A portolan chart is a map of the sea showing sailing routes and containing information about ports but little about the interior.

This portolan features drawings of flags near important ports. For example, figures 3 and 4 show the coast of North



Figure 1. The flag of Princeton University, flying above East Pyne Hall.



Figure 2. Portolan chart of the Mediterranean Sea, made in 1640 by Placidus Caloiro et Oliva.

Africa near Algiers, and the southern coast of Anatolia. The same crescent flag is shown in both places, probably meant to represent the Ottoman Empire.



Figures 3 and 4. The coast of northern Africa near Algiers (left) and the southern coast of Anatolia in the portolan chart of Placidus Caloiro et Oliva.

And figure 5 shows northern Italy, with Genoa and Venice. I don't think either of these represents historical flags as we know them, but it would be fascinating to investigate further.

Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem

One of the most richly detailed items we own is a facsimile edition of the *Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem*.³ This 12-volume atlas was created in the 1660s in Amsterdam by Joan Blaeu. In addition to maps, it includes numerous illustrations of seaports, and the ships that frequented them. This, of course, is where we encounter flags.



Figure 5. The northern Italy in the portolan chart of Placidus Caloiro et Oliva.



Figure 6. Detail of the harbor of São Tomé in São Tomé; detail of Fort Nassau (in present-day Ghana), in *Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem*.

With its origins in the Netherlands, this atlas naturally places an emphasis on those areas of the world where the Dutch East India company traded, so ports in South and East Asia are well-represented. Dutch flags abound! Intriguingly, this was a period when the Dutch flag was in flux—from the late 1500s an orange-white-blue triband was used, and by the 1660s a red stripe was supposed to have replaced the orange. However, we can see in the illustrations that orange and red are both in use.

In figure 6, flags with both colors are depicted at sea and over forts.

Sometimes, orange-striped and red-striped flags appear in the same illustration! (fig. 7). As well, the proportions of the Dutch flags depicted seem to vary. Sometimes the stripes are identical in height, in other cases the central white stripe is wider than the other (fig. 8).



Figure 7. Detail of the harbor of Aboina (present-day Ambon, Indonesia) in *Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem*.



Figure 8. Detail of the harbor of Batavia (modern-day Jakarta, Indonesia) in *Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem*.



Figure 9. Details of the Battle of Goa in *Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem*.

We can also learn about other Dutch flag-flying practices. Figure 9 shows the 1638 naval battle of Goa, against the Portuguese. The Portuguese ships are wearing the Spanish flag because at that date the king of Spain was also king of Portugal. For the Dutch ships, we can see that in addition to the national flag, there are a number of other banners. I haven't looked into them but I'm sure some of our Dutch colleagues can identify



Figure 10. Details of the harbor of Ternate in *Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem*.

the yellow-red-blue flag at topmast, and some of the others.

Figure 10 is a depiction of the port of Ternate, in the Maluku Islands of what is now Indonesia. I'm sure there's a fascinating story of what seems to be a heraldic banner, and a pennant showing a symbol that reminds me of the logo of the Minnesota Twins baseball team used between 1961 and 1986 (fig. 11).

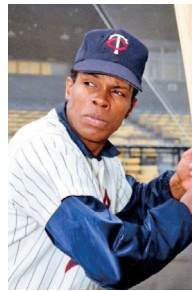


Figure 11. Minnesota Twins star Rod Carew, who played for the team 1967–1978. Source: <flickr.com/charmcityvinyl>



Figure 12. Detail of the harbor of Amboina (present-day Ambon, Indonesia) in *Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem*.

Figure 12 shows the port of Ambon, also in the Maluku Islands. The flag with a disembodied arm carrying a sword is reminiscent of the Bedford Flag carried in the earliest battles of the American Revolutionary War (fig. 13).



Figure 13. The Bedford Flag, obverse (left) and reverse. Source: Barbara Hitchcock, *The Bedford Flag: A National Treasure* (Bedford, Mass.: Friends of the Bedford Flag, 1998), 24–25.

Other nations' flags are also seen in the atlas. Figure 14 depicts the Siege of Malta in 1565, showing the fleet of the Ottoman Empire engaged with the ships of the Knights Hospitaller, who controlled the islands. I've usually seen the Knights depicted with a Maltese cross, but here their symbol might better be described as a cross moline. The Turks have crescents, but the blue background is unfamiliar. Given that



Figure 14. Detail of the Siege of Malta in *Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem*.

this image was created a century after the event, one may fairly question its accuracy.

Elsewhere, we see plenty of Ottoman flags that we are

accustomed to (fig. 15). But it appears that a swallowtail version was used on land fortifications (fig. 16).

There are plenty of mysterious flags—at least to me! I'm sure some of you, or the vexillological literature if I bothered to search, might reveal the identity of some of these. For example, Portuguese forts in Goa are flying a red cross pattée on white, which I'm not sure I've seen used to represent the Portuguese empire (fig. 17).

And what are these dotted flags seen in a port of the Macassar Kingdom? (fig. 18).



Figure 15. Detail of the Hellespont in *Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem*.



Figure 16. Detail of the Hellespont in *Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem*.



Figure 17. Details of Goa in *Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem*.



Figure 18. Details of the harbor of "Samboppe" (present-day Fort Somba Opu, Indonesia) in *Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem*.



Figure 19. Details of the harbor of Aboina (present-day Ambon, Indonesia) in *Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem*.

There is also evidence of Asian flags, such as these flying on land in the port of Ambon (fig. 19).

Southern India in the 18th Century

Moving on from the atlas to other items in the collection, more flags related to the East India trade can be seen on a map of southern India, made in Amsterdam in the 1730s (fig. 20).⁴ The Dutch flags (circled in figure 21), of course, mark the outposts of the Dutch East India company. This saltire at the city marked “Trangebare” intrigued me—at first I thought it was a misrepresentation of the British flag. But it turns out that Tranquebar was actually a colony of the Danish East India Company, an entity which I had never heard of.

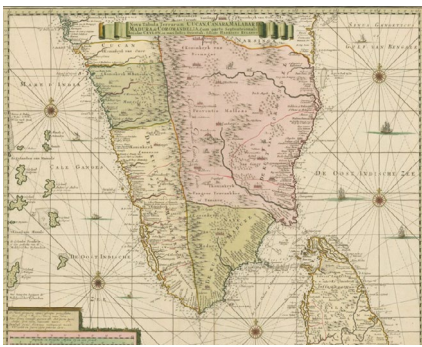


Figure 20. Adriaan Reelant's map of southern India, 1730s.

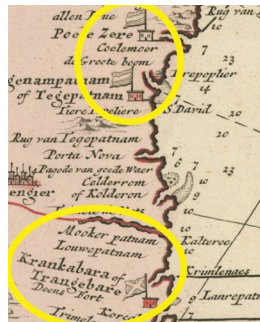


Figure 21. Detail of Reelant's map, showing the coast of present-day Tamil Nadu.

Nautical Flags of the Late 18th Century

I found more mystery flags in a colored engraving made in 1787, showing the coast of Ostend, now in Belgium (fig. 22).⁵ In addition to a pretty early depiction of the U.S. flag, there are two flags I don't know, one with a yellow field and a horse in the canton (fig. 23), the other with what might be a double-headed eagle (fig. 24).

Another early depiction of an American flag comes in an engraving of Esek Hopkins, the first Commander-in-Chief of the

Continental Navy (fig. 25).⁶ The engraver, based in Paris, probably recreated the flag from a verbal description, as the tree in the engraving doesn't look much like



Figure 22. Detail of Louis Masquelier's 1787 engraving *Vue d'Ostende, prise du cote de la mer* [View of Ostend from the Sea].



Figure 23. Unidentified flag in Masquelier's engraving.



Figure 24. Unidentified flag in Masquelier's engraving.



Figure 25. Jean-Victor Dupin's engraving of Esek Hopkins, late 1770s.

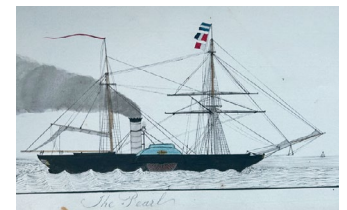
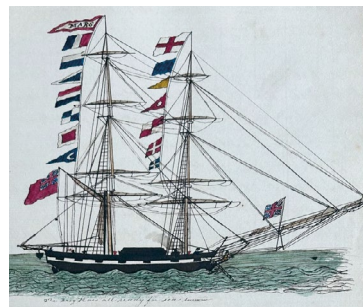


Figure 26. Detail of the flag in Dupin's portrait of Hopkins.

the pine we are familiar with. The flag was used by some naval ships in the Revolution, but not necessarily those commanded by Hopkins, and the motto appears to have been translated from English to French and then back, changing “An Appeal to Heaven” to “An Appeal to God” (fig. 26). Peter Ansoff has a lengthy analysis of this engraving in volume 11 of *Raven*.⁷

Sailor's Notebooks

Another nautical item in Special Collections is a manuscript workbook of navigational studies, prepared by an aspiring English seaman named John Durrell between 1834 and 1859.⁸ In addition to notes on navigation and voyages he undertook, he includes illustrations of ships with flags (figs. 27 and 28). There are also charts of signal flags—showing a numeric code indicating common messages and names of ports (fig. 29). And lots of national, civic, and governmental



Figures 27 and 28. From John Durrell's notebook, the brig *Mars* (left) and the *Pearl* (above).



Figure 29. Signal flags and a numerical code key from John Durrell's notebook.

flags (fig. 30). Some I hadn't seen before include the Wallachian merchant flag, Batavia (now called Jakarta, Indonesia), and a flag for Persia with three lions (fig. 31).



Figure 30. National, civic, and governmental flags from John Durrell's notebook.



Figure 31. Flags from John Durrell's notebook. Left to right: Wallachian merchant flag; Batavia; Persia.

In the 20th century, another unnamed seaman affiliated with the Royal Navy prepared his own manuscript of signal flags, in a pocket-sized notebook.⁹ These are drawn by hand with the tiniest pen imaginable.

As shown in Figure 32, the navy made use of a limited number of signal flags by combining them to form numerical codes. Common words were indicated by numerical ciphers.



Figure 32. A 20th-century notebook of Royal Navy signal flags and codes.

1. Absolute	Accomplish	" I am clear for
2. Accept	Account	" Shall I commence
3. Accident	Accurate	
4. Accompany	Accuse	" You had in coming in?"
5. According	Acknowledge	Admiral's Office, go to

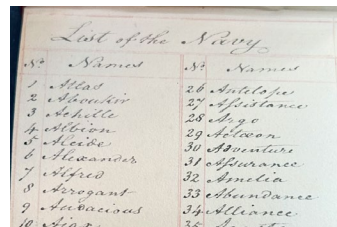


Figure 33. Royal Navy signal flag codes for ship names

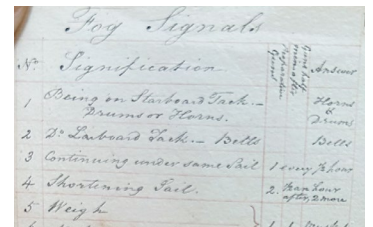


Figure 34. Audible signal codes of the Royal Navy.

And instead of spelling out the name of a ship, for example, each ship had a code number (fig. 33).

In the case of fog, flags were of no use, of course. So a system of audible signals, with drums, horns, and bells, was used instead (fig. 34).

Expressions of British Nationalism

Back on land in Britain, we have a fascinating manuscript written for the education of a young woman, by her father, a captain in the army. In addition to useful skills such as making a pen, winding a watch, and studying botany, he offers an explanation of the parts of the Union flag, as well as the various ensigns and their uses (fig. 35).

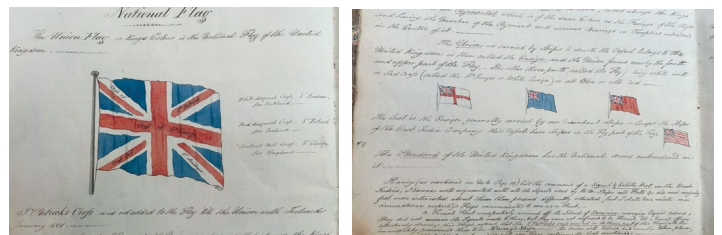


Figure 35. Captain John Ford's explanation of the Union Flag and British ensigns for his daughter Charlotte, ca. 1830.

Another exhibition of British nationalism is found on a pitcher manufactured by the Royal Doulton ceramic company as a souvenir of the capture of Pretoria in 1900 by British troops, an early British success in the Second Boer War (fig. 36).¹¹ It originally belonged to General John Maxwell, who was military governor of Pretoria following its surrender.



Figure 36. A Doulton pitcher made "in commemoration of the hoisting of the [British] flag at Pretoria", 1900.

If time allowed, I could of course show you much more, but I hope that has been diverting and perhaps inspiring. It's just a reminder that the dark corners of the internet are not the only places you can find vexillological source material! See a future issue of Vexillum for Part 2 of this presentation.

Flags in the Special Collections of Princeton University Library—Part 2



By Steven A. Knowlton

This talk was given at NAVA 58 in St. Paul, Minnesota, in September 2024. It appears in two installments; the first was in Vexillum 29. The casual tone represents the tenor of the presentation.

I have the professional privilege of working as a librarian at Princeton University in New Jersey. Our library contains a wonderland of research materials on every topic conceivable, including flags.

Princeton has plenty of material about flags in the general collection, of course. Something a little more special is the fascinating flag material that is quite uncommon and possibly unique, and is found in Princeton's special collections. I share some more items with you now.

At a few points, I'll be mentioning flags that I can't identify. If you can identify one, please feel free to contact me at steven.knowlton@princeton.edu.

19th- and 20th-Century U.S. Flags

The American flag can be studied from our collection as well. I have often mistakenly thought that George Henry Preble's 1872 history of the flag was the first book-length work on the topic.¹² But we have an 1852 title by Schuyler Hamilton, *History of the National Flag of the United States of America*.¹³ At only 115 pages, it is not nearly as comprehensive as Preble's 500-page book, but it does have reconstructions of purported early designs (fig. 37).

Hamilton states in his preface that his motivation is to debunk the notion that the flag was inspired by George Washington's arms, and he prints the text of early documents to show how the flag came to be.



Figure 37. Reconstructions of early U.S. flag designs from Schuyler Hamilton's *History of the National Flag of the United States of America*, 1852.

A few years later, there was a flurry of flag-making as the United States Army swelled to over 600,000 soldiers in the war to suppress the Southern rebellion. Twenty years after the war, the federal government began a serious effort

to collect primary sources, such as the 127-volume *Official Records of the Union and Confederate*

Armies.¹⁴ For its part, the office of the Quartermaster General offered a fascinating compilation of unit flags, from the army corps down to the brigade level.¹⁵ In keeping with his modesty in dress, General Ulysses S. Grant used a standard-issue flag for his headquarters (fig. 38). But General William T. Sherman and General George Gordon Meade were more flamboyant in their choices (fig. 39).



Figure 38. The flag of General Grant's headquarters, as depicted in *Flags of the Army of the United States Carried during the War of the Rebellion*.



Figure 39. The flag of the headquarters of General Sherman (left) and General Meade, as depicted in *Flags of the Army of the United States Carried during the War of the Rebellion*.



Figure 40. Flag designating a Union Army hospital, as depicted in *Flags of the Army of the United States Carried during the War of the Rebellion*.

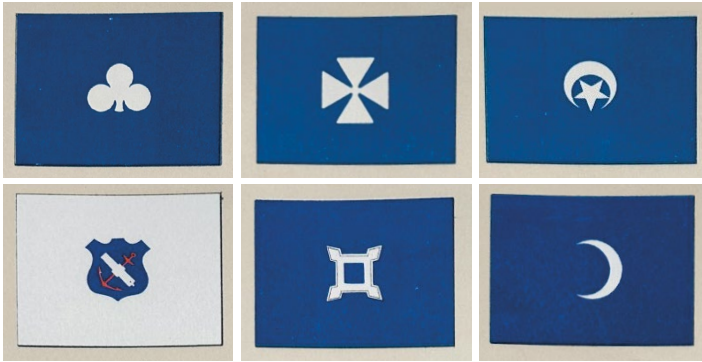


Figure 41. From top left: Flags of the 2nd, 5th, 7th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, and 15th corps of the Union Army, as depicted in *Flags of the Army of the United States Carried during the War of the Rebellion*.



I'll just share some of the more interesting designs here. The yellow flag indicating a hospital was reminiscent of quarantine flags used in ports (fig. 40). The flags of the army corps, such as the Second Corps, often had as a main charge the same shape that was sewn as a badge on the soldiers' blouses to indicate their unit. The same was true for many corps, including the 5th, the 7th, the 9th, the 10th, the 11th, the 12th, and the 15th (fig. 41).

Other units bore flags with symbols still in use today, such as the Corps of Engineers, and the artillery (fig. 42).

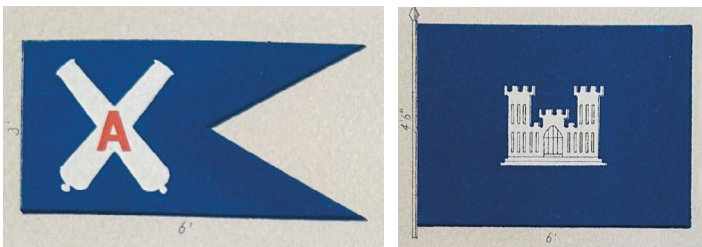


Figure 42. Flags of the artillery (left) and the Corps of Engineers of the Union Army, as depicted in *Flags of the Army of the United States Carried during the War of the Rebellion*.

Also from the Civil War era is an illustrated song book, which shows a variety of designs for Old Glory.¹⁶ The canton might be as tall as seven stripes, or five, and rest on either a white or red stripe (fig. 43).



Figure 43. Illustrated song sheets showing a variety of designs for the U.S. flag, from *Six Military and Patriotic Illustrated Songs*, 1860s.

A very different American flag tradition was captured in a drawing of the Tewa people of New Mexico made



Figure 44. *Dancers and Chorus, San Ildefonso Pueblo*, by Awa Tsireh, ca. 1914–1918.

between 1914 and 1918 (fig. 44).¹⁷ The artist, Awa Tsireh, was a member of the Tewa nation himself. I don't know the context of the event depicted here, but I'm sure there are some anthropological works about it. Although at first glance, I thought some of these objects were Roman-style vexillum-shaped objects, they are in fact headdresses (fig. 45).



Figure 45. Detail of *Dancers and Chorus, San Ildefonso Pueblo* showing headdresses.

Canadian Recruiting Posters of World War I and II

Turning north, I found two interesting examples of Canadian flag use. Some years ago, Ken Reynolds wrote an article in *Raven* about the development of a unique “Battle Flag” for Canadian troops in the Second World War, in use from 1939 forward (fig. 46).¹⁸ It was intended to be a flag “acceptable to all elements of Canada’s population”, including those who were not of British descent, particularly Francophones. Despite the existence of the battle flag, in recruiting posters, the Union Flag was more in evidence.

The poster in figure 47 was issued in 1941 or 1942, under the auspices of J. T. Thorson, Minister of National War Services.¹⁹ Interestingly, Thorson was of Icelandic descent, but must have thought the Union Flag had some drawing power for a recruiting ad.



Figure 46. The cover of *Raven*, volume 14, showing the Canadian Army's Battle Flag of World War II.



Figure 47. Canadian Army recruiting poster, ca. 1941–1942.

It recalls another poster from the First World War that was aimed at British and Canadian expatriates living in the United States (fig. 48).²⁰ In the fine print, it gives the address of the United States Army recruiting office in El Paso, Texas. Lacking a better alternative, the U.S. Army simply used the Union Flag to represent both Britons and Canadians.



Figure 48. U.S. Army recruiting poster, ca. 1917–1918.

Flag Charts

We’ve got flag charts, as well, like the one from 1896 shown in figure 49.²¹ I think the Irish flag in figure 50 is

entirely mythical, and the flags shown for Burma and New Zealand indicate that the chartmaker seems to be behind the times for some British colonies, who were all using defaced Blue or Red Ensigns by this time.



Figure 49. F. E. Wright’s *Flags of All Nations*, 1896.



Figure 50. Erroneous or outdated flags from Wright’s *Flags of All Nations*, 1896.

It’s interesting to compare that chart to the flags shown in an 1891 geography text book, written in Spanish but published in New York.²² Clearly, all the artists of this period who worked on the Burmese flag are relying on written descriptions, as the image varies greatly. The same may have been true for Nicaragua and Turkey as well (fig. 51).



Figure 51. Speculative flag illustrations for Burma, Nicaragua, and Turkey, from *Primer libro de geografía de Smith*, 1891.

Flags in Children’s Books

An especially strong part of our Special Collections is called the Cotsen Children’s Library, which has more than 80,000 works of children’s literature. One interesting

series is a set of Chinese language readers for elementary school students, from 1911, the year of the overthrow of the last emperor.²³ The book for the earliest readers has only pictures, so we surmise that there must have been an instructor’s manual that gave the teacher prompts for discussion of the pictures. There are two pictures with flags—the national flag in full color, and the army flag; we can imagine teachers instructing students in the symbolism of these banners (fig. 52).

Books for slightly older readers include simple text alongside pictures.²⁴ This image shows a schoolhouse, flying the national flag and a banner with the name of the village, Heteng. Also shown are students engaged in physical activities that encourage preparedness for later soldiering (fig. 53).

Yet more advanced readers are given short stories that illustrate character traits to be cultivated. In a story illustrating patriotism, the 12th-century general Yue Fei is shown bearing a flag with the character for “order”, as in a military command (fig. 54). Although he was a successful general, Yue was famously obedient to the emperor even when it meant he would personally suffer.

The theme of “persistence through hardship” is demonstrated with the story of Christopher Columbus, whose ship and flag are shown in figure 55. And Abraham Lincoln appears in figure 56; the story concerns him trying to rescue a pig who had fallen in the mud, and getting dirty himself.



Figure 52. The national flag of republican China (left) and the army flag from *Chung-hua Ethical Readers for Lower Primary Schools*, 1911.

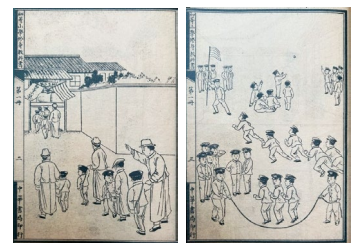


Figure 53. Flags in illustrations of schools from *Chung-hua Ethical Readers for Lower Primary Schools*, 1911.



Figure 54. General Yue Fei, illustrated in *Chung-hua Ethical Readers for Lower Grades Elementary School Students*, 1913.

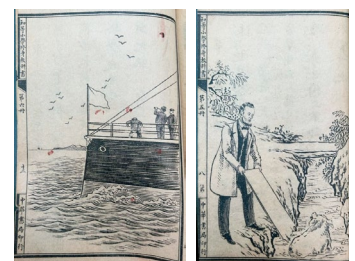


Figure 55. Christopher Columbus, illustrated in *Chung-hua Ethical Readers for Lower Grades Elementary School Students*, 1913.

Figure 56. Abraham Lincoln, illustrated in *Chung-hua Ethical Readers for Lower Grades Elementary School Students*, 1913.

We also have some children's books from Japan. Figure 57 shows the cover of *Military Songs for Fighting the Qing Dynasty*, published in 1894 during the First Sino-Japanese War.²⁵ The flags at the top are labelled as the Navy Flag; the Army Flag; the Hinomaru, or "Ball of the Sun", which is the national flag; and the "National Japanese Flag". I haven't seen other sources that show the leftmost and rightmost flags.



Figure 57. *Military Songs for Fighting the Qing Dynasty: For Japan's Unfailing Victory*, 1894.

The next Sino-Japanese War produced a book in 1938 titled *The Great Victory of the Japanese Army* (fig. 58).²⁶ It depicts at the top the flags of the emperor and the royal family, in the third row naval rank flags, with the rightmost being the Minister of the Navy. Below that are flags for lower-ranking officers, and the bottom has a flag which my translator couldn't figure out, a naval pennant, and the familiar national and naval flags.

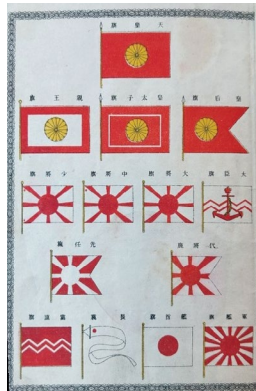


Figure 58. *The Great Victory of the Japanese Army*, 1938.

Another children's book is from mid-20th-century Belgium (fig. 59).²⁷ The reader would paste in stamps of flags and arms next to a description of the country (fig. 60). Information about the flags is not necessarily given, but a postage stamp from the country is included. There are considerable artistic liberties taken in the drawings of the flags (fig. 61).



Figure 59. *Flags and Stamps*, 1950s.



Figure 60. Above right: Images of flags, arms and postage stamps from *Flags and Stamps*, 1950s.



Figure 61. Right: Images of flags (some with artistic license taken) and postage stamps from *Flags and Stamps*, 1950s.

An Early Modern Flag Book

Bringing our tour of flag books full circle to the 17th century, I also found a 1694 book containing images and discussion of flags of the Holy Roman Empire, written by the mathematician and philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz.²⁸ The page facing the title shows a flag labelled "Free Banner" for Württemberg, and a pennon which marks "dependence or inferiority" (fig. 62). There are three portraits of Dukes of Württemberg: Ulrich III, Ulrich V the Well-Beloved, and Eberhard V the Bearded (fig. 63).



Figure 62. The "Free Banner" of Württemberg, shown in *Wechsel-Schriften vom Reichs Bannier*, 1694.



Figure 63. Dukes Ulrich III, Ulrich V the Well-Beloved, and Eberhard V the Bearded of Württemberg, with their arms, shown in *Wechsel-Schriften vom Reichs Bannier*, 1694.

Interestingly, their arms are shown evolving over time, but the banners they carry are not armorial banners. The same banner is quartered in the arms of Eberhard V, who ruled in the late 1400s (fig. 64). This is called the *Reichssturmfahne*, or Imperial Storm Flag—awarded to the nobility for their valor in battle and signifying the right of first contact with the enemy. It appears that the motivation for Leibniz to write the book was a controversy over the recent granting of privileges to his patron the Duke of Hannover, who after 1692 was "entrusted with an imperial office—the *Erzbanneramt*, or the task of guarding the banner of the Empire", which Leibniz is striving to distinguish from the banner carried by the dukes of Württemberg.²⁹



Figure 64. The arms of Eberhard V, including the *Reichssturmfahne*, shown in *Wechsel-Schriften vom Reichs Bannier*, 1694.

Actual Flags

Of course, printed works are not the only things in our collection. We have some actual flags, too. The Chinese flag in figure 65 was one owned by a Presbyterian missionary who served in Ningbo from 1848 to 1863.³⁰

Figure 66 shows a flag labelled the “Albany bi-centennial flag”, for the anniversary celebrated in the New York state capital in 1886.³¹ We can see the old and new Dutch flags on the left, and British and American symbolism on the right. The seal in the middle is still in service for the city. I’m not sure what is represented by the English cross with the globe.

Vexillonomistics

We also have an extensive collection of coins and medals from all eras and countries. Figure 67 shows a French medal from 1676 that commemorates the expulsion of the Dutch from the French colony of Cayenne during the Franco-Dutch War.³² The inscription says, “You killed the Dutch”, but of most interest is the evidence of the design of the French flag.

The British medal in figure 68 was issued on the occasion of the liberation of Lille, France, by the British Fifth Army during the closing days of World War I.³³ On the reverse, it says, “This flag was carried by the General Commanding the 5th British Army During the operation which led to the delivrance [sic] of Lille, presented to the city by General Sir W. R. Birdwood.” The phrase “this flag” is a little frustrating, because two flags are shown! Neither design is familiar to me.

A Greek medal seems like an odd place to find a Bavarian flag (fig. 69)—until we look at the date of 1832 and remember that when Greece first became independent from the Ottoman Empire in 1827, it was governed as a republic, but in 1832 the great powers of Europe determined a monarchy was necessary and placed Otto, a Bavarian prince, on the throne. This medal is marked “Munich, October 3, 1832” and commemorates the arrival of a Greek delegation



Figure 65. Chinese flag once owned by Henry Rankin, a Presbyterian missionary in Ningbo during the 19th century.



Figure 66. Albany (N.Y.) “bi-centennial flag” from 1886.



Figure 67. A French medal commemorating the victory over the Dutch at Cayenne in 1676.



Figure 68. A medal commemorating the liberation of Lille by the Fifth British Army in 1918.

to Munich to invite Otto, or Otho as he was called in Greek, to take the throne.³⁴ The inscription above is a quotation from the New Testament letter to the Hebrews, chapter 7. It reads, “Prince of Salem who is the prince of peace”—Salem being a Hebrew place name that means “peace”. Alas, Otto’s reign was less than pacific, and he was deposed in 1862.

If time allowed, I could of course show you much more, but I hope that has been diverting and perhaps inspiring. It’s just a reminder that the dark corners of the internet are not the only places you can find vexillological source material!

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[Notes 1–11 are in Part 1, *Vexillum* 29.]

¹² George Henry Preble, *Our Flag: Origin and Progress of the Flag of the United States of America, with an Introductory Account of the Symbols, Standards, Banners and Flags of Ancient and Modern Nations* (Albany: J. Munsell, 1872).

¹³ Schuyler Hamilton, *History of the National Flag of the United States of America* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, and Co., 1852), PUL Special Collections—Graphic Arts Collection 2006-1425N.

¹⁴ Robert N. Scott, ed., *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1883).

¹⁵ Samuel Beckley Holabird, *Flags of the Army of the United States Carried during the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1865, To Designate the Headquarters of the Different Armies, Army Corps, Divisions and Brigades; Compiled under Direction of the Quartermaster General U.S. Army* (Philadelphia: Burk & McPetridge, 1887).

¹⁶ *Six Military and Patriotic Illustrated Songs*, series no. 1 (New York: C. Magnus, 1860s), PUL Special Collections—Graphic Arts Collection, RECAP-97003782.

¹⁷ Ava Tsireh, *Dancers and Chorus, San Ildefonso Pueblo* (ca. 1914–1918), PUL Special Collections—Graphic Arts Collection, GA 2011.01538 A Middle 38/Drawer 05/GC059/Half Folio/Artists Q-Z.

¹⁸ Ken Reynolds, “To Make the Unmistakable Signal “Canada”: The Canadian Army’s ‘Battle Flag’ during the Second World War”, *Raven* 14 (2007): 1–34.

¹⁹ Henri Eveleigh, “Let’s Go... Canada!” (Ottawa: Director of Public Information, ca. 1941–1942), PUL Special Collections—Graphic Arts Collection, GA 2017.00193 A South 04/Drawer 11/GC156/Elephant Folio/World War 2.

²⁰ “British Blood Calls British Blood! Sons of Britain and Canada Resident in the United States, Join Your Army Here. Enlist now!” (Chicago, ca. 1917–1918), PUL Special Collections—Graphic Arts Collection, GA 2017.00077 C South 05/Drawer 07/GC156/Full Folio/World War 1/American.

²¹ F. E. Wright, *Flags of All Nations* (New York, 1896), PUL Special Collections—Graphic Arts Collection, GA 2007.00719 E North 32/GC024/Box 029/Normal/19th c./Artists White, G. G. & Wright, F. E.

²² Asa Smith, *Primer libro de geografía de Smith: dispuesto para los niños y adornado con más de 100 grabados, 18 mapas y un cuadro de banderas [Smith’s First Book of Geography: Arranged for Children and Embellished with More Than 100 Engravings, 18 Maps, and a Table of Flags]* (New York: D. Appleton, 1891), PUL Special Collections—Cotsen Children’s Library, 102876 Eng 19.

²³ Maogong Chen, *Zhonghua chu deng xiao xue xiu shen jiao ke shu [Chung-hua Ethical Readers for Lower Primary Schools]* (Shanghai: Zhonghua shu ju [Chung Hwa Book Co.], 1911), PUL Special Collections—Cotsen Children’s Library, 96956 Pams / NR / Chinese / Box 220.

²⁴ Maogong Chen, *Zhonghua chu deng xiao xue xiu shen jiao ke shu [Chung-hua Ethical Readers for Lower Grades Elementary School Students]* (Shanghai: Zhonghua shu ju [Chung Hwa Book Co.], 1913), PUL Special Collections—Cotsen Children’s Library, 31958 Pams / NR / Chinese / Box 10.



Figure 69. A medal commemorating the visit of a Greek delegation to invite Otto I to claim the throne, 1832.

²⁵ Tadano Yoko, *Shinkoku seito gunka: Dai Nippon hissho [Military Songs for Fighting the Qing Dynasty: For Japan's Unfailing Victory]* (Osaka: Osaka Dobukan, 1894), PUL Special Collections—Cotsen Children's Library, 96117 Pams / NR / Japanese / Box 113.

²⁶ Kumesaku Yuasa, *Nippongun daishori [The Great Victory of the Japanese Army]* (Tokyo: Shunkodo, 1938), PUL Special Collections—Cotsen Children's Library, 98975 Pams / NR / Japanese / Box 46.

²⁷ A. Blonk, *Vlaggen en postzegels [Flags and Stamps]* (Antwerp: Gebrs. Veen, 1950s), PUL Special Collections—Cotsen Children's Library, 7317934 Euro 20 unprocessed.

²⁸ Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Wechsel-Schriften vom Reichs Bannier [Exchanges of Documents about the Imperial Banner]* (Hannover: Nicolaus Förstern, 1694), PUL Special Collections—Rare Books, 1042.959.

²⁹ Maria Rosa Antognazza, *Leibniz: An Intellectual Biography* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 333.

³⁰ Chinese flag belonging to Henry V. Rankin, missionary of the Presbyterian Church, PUL Special Collections—Graphic Arts Collection, (Ex) 4490 D Alcove 01/Drawer 05/MOC01/Small.

³¹ Albany bi-centennial flag (1886), PUL Special Collections—Graphic Arts Collection, (Ex) 4440 D Alcove 01/Drawer 05/MOC01/Small.

³² Medal of Louis XIV (1676), PUL Special Collections—Numismatics Collection, Coin 6444.

³³ Medal of the French Republic (1918), PUL Special Collections—Numismatics Collection, Coin 6681.

³⁴ Medal of Otto I, 1832, PUL Special Collections—Numismatics Collection, Coin 8287.

Feedback from readers

In “Flags in the Special Collections of Princeton University Library—Part 1”, *Vexillum* 29 (March 2025), Steve Knowlton shared some images from the 17th-century Dutch publication *Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem* and noted that some readers might be able to identify flags that he was unable to name.

Alert correspondents shared their knowledge of the unidentified flags, and we are happy to pass on their responses.

Figure 5

“The flag of Genoa is the cross of St. George, which is the accurate historical flag of the Republic of Genoa.”

—Miguel de Faria e Castro



Figure 9

“Figure 9 has instances of the ‘double Princevlag’ and of the ‘triple Princevlag’, which are repetitions of the Princevlag that were commonly used in Dutch ships since the mid-1500s. On that note, the simultaneous use of orange and red Princevlags was common in the mid-1600s, precisely the period of the *Atlas Blaeu*. The Wikipedia article for the Statenvlag (the flag with red vs. orange) has a good short discussion on the simultaneous usage that contains academic references: <wikipedia.org/wiki/Statenvlag>.” —Miguel de Faria e Castro



Figure 10a

“The Dutch flag (orange-white-blue) originates from the early days of the Dutch Revolt against the Spanish kingdom (late 16th century) The orange was a reference to William of Orange, one of the leaders of this revolt. Since circa 1630–1640 the orange gradually changed to red, the lineup that existed already before the revolt but was not officially in use as a national flag.” —Jeroen ter Brugge



Figure 10b

“The yellow flag with red lion is a somewhat simplified flag of the States General of the United Dutch Republic, quite commonly used on Dutch admiralty and East Indiamen.” —Jeroen ter Brugge



“The red flag with the sword in a wreath is the flag of Batavia (now Jakarta). Another variant of the Batavia flag is known: red-white-blue striped (multi-fold) also with the wreath.” —Jeroen ter Brugge



Figure 12

“The red flag with arm and sword indeed was used as a battle flag in the Low Countries (also, and more commonly, a plain red flag was used for this purpose). The other red flag (the jack) seems to be the flag of the city of Vlissingen (Flushing) in the province of Zeeland (Zealand), a silver vase on the red field. This might indicate that this is a Zeeland admiralty vessel.” —Jeroen ter Brugge

Figure 17

“The Portuguese red cross on a white field is almost surely a misrepresentation of the Cross of Christ flag, which was commonly used by the Portuguese Empire to decorate ship sails and colonial topological markers (*padroes*), and is still used as the roundel of the Portuguese Air Force to the present day; see <crwfflags.com/fotw/flags/pt_oxp.html>.”

—Miguel de Faria e Castro



Flag of the Ordem dos Cavaleiros de Cristo (Order of the Knights of Christ). Source: Flags of the World.



Portuguese Air Force helicopter, showing the roundel. Source: <jetphotos.com/photo/9878663>.

VEXILLUM 30: CORRECTIONS

On p. 14, in “Flags in the Special Collections of Princeton University Library—Part 2”, author Steve Knowlton opined: “I think the Irish flag in figure 50 is entirely mythical”.

Alert reader Paul Cody notes that the Irish flag mentioned, a gold harp on a green field, actually “has a history that includes its use by independence rebellions, including by Wolf Tone and the United Irishmen during the Irish Rebellion of 1798 and by the Irish Republican Brotherhood and the Fenian Brotherhood during the Fenian Rising of 1867. A discussion may be found at <irishstudies.sunygeneseoenglish.org/the-green-harp-flag>. So it was the flag of national aspiration and far from mythical.” [see *Raven* 16, 2016, “Captured! James Connolly’s Green Flag of Ireland: Liberty Hall, the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, and the 1916 Garrison Flags”, by Rachel Phelan.]

Steve Knowlton regrets confusing that flag with the “Green Ensign”, which had a British Union Flag in the canton of the green flag with



the harp, and cites evidence he since found that the Green Ensign actually flew—<rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/rmgc-object-724>.
