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ВЕКСИЛЛОИДЫ В СОЦИОКУЛЬТУРНОМ ПРОСТРАНСТВЕ РОССИИ И БРИТАНИИ

Аннотация: Государственная символика находится в ведении геральдики и вексиллологии, вспомогательных исторических дисциплин. Вексиллология, будучи самостоятельной дисциплиной, имеет много общего с геральдикой. Герб и флаг совпадают по функциям: служат идентификации и выражению себя. Флаги также являются своеобразной знаковой системой, одной из самых динамичных. Они отражают изменения в социокультурной жизни общества и темпоральные характеристики, помогают в атрибуции и исследовании культурно-исторических феноменов. В функциональном смысле знамя объединяет группы людей по какому-либо признаку, приобщает их к какому-либо социальному образованию. Гербы и флаги имеют органическую связь, хотя не все флаги являются геральдическими. Геральдические флаги имеют несколько видов, отличных по размерам и форме. И русские, и европейские флаги не имели строгих правил составления и отличались значительным многообразием. Для России вопрос флага всегда был очень неустойчивый. С одной стороны, на этот аспект символики не обращали особого внимания и он никогда не находился в строгом порядке, с другой стороны, если и когда на него внимание обращали, то он становился предметом фанатичного поклонения и ожесточённых споров.

Ключевые слова: геральдика, герб, вексиллология, знак, знамя, семиотика, флаг, хоругвь, штандарт.

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VEXILLOIDS IN THE SOCIO-CULTURAL SPHERE OF RUSSIA AND BRITAIN

Abstract: State symbols are under the jurisdiction of heraldry and vexillology, applied historical disciplines. Being self-contained, vexillology has much in common with heraldry. Banner and coat of arms coincide in functions, being used as means of identification and manifestation of self. Flags are a very specific sign system and one of the most dynamic. They reflect changes in socio-cultural life of the nation and temporal characteristics, assist in attribution and investigation of cultural phenomena. As far as function is concerned the banner unites people according to some criterion and assimilates them into some social institution. Flags and coat of arms are inherently interconnected, though not all the banners are heraldic. Heraldic flags are divided into several types, different in form and size. Neither Russian nor European standards have strict rules of composition; both were very varied. As for Russia the flag has always been a very fluid issue. On the one hand that aspect of symbols has been disregarded and never followed a strict order, on the other, if and when banner is beheld, it becomes the object of worship and heated argument.

Keywords: banner, coat of arms, flag, gonfalon, heraldry, semiotics, sign, standard, vexillology.

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State symbols are explored by heraldry, an applied historical discipline, the separate semiotics and a separate aspect of socio-cultural processes. At the mention of the state symbols, one could not help avoiding banners. Flags are a very peculiar sign system and among the most dynamic ones. They reflect changes in socio-cultural life of a community and temporal characteristics. As mostly all the rest historical units they assist in the attribution and study of cultural and historical phenomena. Banners fall under the jurisdiction of vexillology, an applied historical discipline, and the sub-element of heraldry. Being a completely self-contained science, vexillology has still much in common with heraldry. Coat of arms and banners coincide in function, being used as means of identification and manifestation of self.

Semiotics in general, and vexillology in particular, reveal algorithm of thinking of different nations and so give the opportunity of effective cross-cultural communication. It makes such a theme quite relevant. Being based on both native and mostly English researches, the paper focuses on semantics and pragmatics of vexilloids, state included, in diachronic

aspect. The main tasks were to view the genesis of flags, their types, sphere of usage, and, as the most important, to provide interpretations of British and Russian state banners.

The science itself got its name from the Latin “vexillum” — a standard, the prototype of flags. The vexillum was a width on a horizontal bar attached to a pole, used in ancient Rome. The most ancient prototypes of flags were figures, military badges, ribbons at the top of poles in the Ancient World. They helped to orientate in battle, just as flags later. In the Ancient East, images of solar deities were used, however, the same was almost everywhere.

Pragmatics of a banner is to unite groups of people on some basis, introduce them to some kind of social institution. In some way, it is close to signs of dignity or authority, such as various wands that were capable of leading people when necessary.

The earliest evidence of banner as width dates back to 1122 BC in China, by 2d BC the width was attached directly to the shaft.

Being the part of heraldry, vexillology distinguishes true and inaccurate flags. The USA flag has a quasi-heraldic character. It appeared due to the main components of the G. Washington coat of arms. The flag of France is not heraldic. The French Bourgeois Revolution took the Dutch colours as a basis, symbolizing the main principles of the emerging bourgeois democracy, but arranged the stripes vertically. Thus, colours, in any form they were depicted, appeared much later than heraldic flags with crosses, etc. and did not correspond to the basic rules of heraldry.

Heraldic flags have several types, different in size and shape. In general, the terminology used in the scientific literature is unstable. The hyperonym for vexilloids is also the word “flag” or “banner”. However, within the heraldry or vexillology, as a science, everything is more or less settled. Heraldic flags include: a pennant, a standard and a banner featuring specific images.

Apparently on the British Isles banners with emblems were already used in the 8th century. They were used both in peacetime and during the war, accompanying a major overlord. They were dynastic or territorial signs. The original heraldic emblems were simple, although there were also signs borrowed from the Roman Empire or the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Flammae Draco was a Roman standard that functioned in Britain for a long time. Perhaps it also served as the prototype for one of the signs of King Arthur, the son of Uther Pendragon. On Bayeux Tapestry there are a lot of images of various standards. The topic of the heraldicity of signs, i.e. the heredity or territoriality of the emblems used on these standards, is controversial. However, it can be viewed as protoheraldry. During the Crusades, flags were widely used, and a variety of crosses, as the images on them, were almost the main.

Pennons and standards were quite popular among knights. “Clamadeu sent twenty knights in front of the gate, carrying all manner of pennons and banners waving in the wind” [10, p. 406].

Standard is a long rectangular flag, forked. It began to be used around the 14th century. The standards were tapered at the end and often split in two corners. They were used in battles and, perhaps, were a kind of unifying element for vassals. The standard background was divided horizontally in the owner's tinctures. On that type of flag, heraldic figures could also be depicted. In addition, the standards had certain size depending on the titles of their owners.

Pennon is a type of small flag. It was usually triangular and elongated with a forked dovetail or slightly oblique angle. It could bear a coat of arms, emblem, etc. Pennon was attached to the pike.

Banner is usually a square flag on which the coat of arms is depicted in the same way as on a shield, i.e. without supporters, crest, etc. The early banner form is rectangular, with

the width being half the length. This flag is the privilege of the titled chivalry. Its size varied depending on the title. House flags can also be referred to as banner. Their usual dimensions are 1.52 * 1.22 m. Banners, unlike flags, are single products. According to their status, they occupy the most revered place. Perhaps it is the most luxurious option of all vexillums. The loss of the banner has always been considered a great shame.

Banners gave the name to a special class of military — bannerets. They had the right to lead a troop to a battle under their own banner, a square or rectangular cloth with a personal coat of arms. The banner indicated the presence of a commander on the battlefield. And an ordinary knight could become a banneret under certain conditions in the case of special merit or special favour of the overlord. Sometimes the ability to have a banner was bestowed on a knight during the battle. Then the commander cut off the long tails from the pennant, thereby turning it into a banner. A knight bachelor were entitled to bear a standard, a bannerets could bear both standards and banners.

Another type of flags was the gonfalon. As a rule, it is a large panel with many tails and is directly related to religious organizations. For Russia it was quite typical.

In England, flags are often put on churches. They are the flags of St. George (white with a red cross); in the upper right corner they bear the coat of arms of the diocese to which the church belongs.

Different types of flags were used in all the rituals and events connected with war and heroic sport, noble activity. “As they gather, some armed, some unarmed, the lances are like a great forest; for so many are brought by those wanting to join in the sport that there is nothing but lances, banners and standards to be seen” [10, p. 260]. Among such phenomenon there is such an element as tournament. “The exterior of the lists was in part occupied by temporary galleries, spread with tapestry and carpets, and accommodated with cushions for the convenience of those ladies and nobles who were expected to attend the tournament. <...> A train of pages and of young maidens, <...> gaily dressed in fancy habits of green and pink, surrounded a throne decorated in the same colours. Among pennons and flags bearing wounded hearts, burning hearts, bleeding hearts, bows and quivers, and all the commonplace emblems of the triumphs of Cupid, a blazoned inscription informed the spectators, that this seat of honour was designed for ‘La Roynne de las Beaulte et des Amours’” [8, p. 93–94].

The British Union Jack is surely heraldic. It appeared during the consolidation of England and Scotland under James I in 1606. It was the mixture of the St. George’s (argent, cross gules) and St. Andrew’s (azure, saltire argent) crosses. St. George’s cross was put over the cross of St. Andrew, which meant its supremacy. However, Scotland, being not satisfied with it, had her own version of the Union Jack — the cross of St. Andrew over the cross of St. George. From the beginning the banner was planned as a flag for navy (see the word jack entry), then for royal ships. St. Patrick’s cross (argent, saltire gules) joined the flag in 1800 following the incorporation of Ireland into the Union. It was placed over the St. Andrew’s, that caused rebels among the Scots. Both saltires were cut in half and connected with cut lines. The wider white stripe of the Scots turned out to be higher than the red Irish one, thereby testifying to the higher status of Scotland. Besides, the crosses were surrounded by a white border.

The etymology of the term “Union Jack” is controversial [3; 6]. The first part of the name is obvious (Union). There are versions about the second. Perhaps “jack” is derived from “Jacques”, the French form of the name James (James I of English, James VI of Scotland), under whom the first unified flag was created. Or, the original word may be “jaque” (French word for an item of clothing on which heraldic emblems were depicted). Then it can be

transited to the flag and, being translated into English, become “jack”. On the other hand, the flag was designed primarily for the navy. It was hung out on the jack-staff at the bow of the ship.

Scotland had its own sophisticated system of heraldic flags, which represented the head of the clan, chiefs and other important members of the society. These flags are governed by the Lord Lyon. The main is the standard of the head of the clan. Such flags are often dated back to the ancient medieval banners.

Still initially flags gave the information about belonging to something (family, organization, country etc). “Serving me is, without fail, painful and burdensome; but I do you a great honour, and you should be very glad-since Love carries the standard and banner of courtesy — that you have so good a master and a lord of such high renown. His bearing is so good, so sweet, open, and gentle, that no villainy, no wrong or evil training can dwell in anyone who is bent on serving and honoring him” [7, p. 57]. The development of heraldry has led to the creation of new forms of flags. With the formation of modern states, the complex heraldic flags of monarchs were replaced by flags with simpler symbols.

Neither Russian nor European flags have strict rules for drawing up and were distinguished by significant diversity. For Russia the flag has always been a very complicated issue. On the one hand, that aspect of symbolism was not almost noticed and it was never in order, on the other hand, if or while being beheld, it became the subject of fanatical worship and fierce controversy.

In the very beginning Russian vexillum was just poles with a tuft of grass or a horse tail at the top. The word “стяг” has the primary meaning of pole or staff. Then it was substituted by fabric wedges. Ancient banners could be various in colours, but red or crimson ones were apparently predominant. In Russia, red has always been treated with special emotive response. The shape of ancient banners is close to triangular, trapezoidal with two or more tails. The colour of the border could be different from the main field. The banner — “kerchief” (a cloth sloping from the bottom up) was clearly visible in the wind, invigorated people with its constant movement and was held out until the 17th century. The idea of movement was also reproduced by another term for the regimental banner — «прапор». With the Baptism, images of crosses and saints appeared on fabric. But preference was given to the Saviour and the Mother of God. The image of the Heavenly Host on the flags gave an idea of support from the heavenly powers. In the 18th century the image of the Saviour disappeared, though the cross, eagle and monograms of monarchs were preserved on the army banners [1].

The banner was sanctified and honored. The banner inspired, protected, led, served as a symbol of one's involvement in something greater, an object of reverence and pride. This attitude has persisted for centuries. “The main banners of medieval Russia were unique in design” [2, p. 415]. Expensive fabrics were chosen for them, and the embroidery was done in silk, silver, and gold.

Many banners and standards are created for regiments and other military formations. Due to the absence of chivalry and, in general, the other nature of the Russian Middle Ages, there were no knightly, urban, guild banners in Russia.

Since ancient times, in Poland, banners with kin signs had been used to unite relatives and neighbours in case of danger. It was the reason for the different families' share of the sign. In Poland, within the aristocracy, double surnames were quite common: the first was a sign of belonging to some kind of a community (for example, an army was gathering under a banner for some kind of campaign), and the second was the actual surname. Runic signs, so

characteristic of Polish heraldry, were worn on special rods even in paganism. Polish heraldry and vexicology were one of the resources of structuralizing of scientific Russian practice.

Disbalance in the field of state symbols is characteristic not only of the current period in the history of our country. Symbolic chaos, inconsistency of the external and internal aspects of the sign, ignorance of the emblems, their meaning and history are manifested in the era of social instability — political, economic or cultural. As far as flag is concerned, it was quite typical for Russia. The national banner has always been a complex and highly contingent issue. It was compiled on purpose, but it was always difficult to take root.

There is a description of the big banner of the boyar N. I. Romanov, where a black eagle and three hands with a cross, and a crown and a sword emerging from the cloud above it were presented. A hand with a sword and a black eagle is an integral element of the Polish coat of arms of Soltyk and the coat of arms of West Prussia. The hand with the crown revealed in the coat of arms of the city of Kneiphof, one of the three components of the city coat of arms of Königsberg. A hand with a cross emerging from a cloud is the coat of arms of the Livonian city of Pernau.

Under Alexei Mikhailovich, the coat of arms with the symbols of Orthodox Russia was created. It can be possibly considered the forerunner of subsequent state banners. The banner was white trapezoidal with a wide crimson border. It depicted a two-headed eagle with a king on a horse stabbing a snake with a spear on the chest, below — the Kremlin, around — the regional emblems of the kingdom. So it concentrated variety of symbols.

Besides, a naval striped flag was created. The flags on the ships made it possible to identify the country in international waters. Therefore, it was also necessary for Russia. As a rule, naval flags did not carry a pattern that was illegible from a distance and in bad weather, but were made up of stripes of coat of arms colours. A combination of white, blue and red was taken. The design of the flag of the ship «Eagle», the basis of our flotilla, is unknown. Presumably, a straight blue cross was located on white and red quarters with a red border around the edge. However, in 1693 Peter I raised a striped flag with a golden eagle, the flag of the “Tsar of Moscow”. In any case, that flag was borrowed from the West and was created under the influence of Holland, the great maritime power of the time. Its striped flag is considered the first state, in the modern sense, flag.

Besides, at the turn of the 18th century the St. Andrew's flag was created. According to legend, the design of the flag was formed from the shadow of the window cover from the morning sun on a sheet of paper. Thinking about the naval flag, Peter I fell asleep at work and upon awakening saw a diagonal blue cross on a white background. Another explanation — the connection of the four corners of the flag — is Russia's ownership of the White, Baltic, Azov, Caspian seas. In 1696 the first Russian military order was launched in honour of Andrew the First-Called. In 1699, the colours was supplemented with the St. Andrew's Cross, but, apparently, in that version, it was almost never used. There is a proof of a great variety of naval flags. Gradually, Andrew's flag replaced the colours in the fleet. Although Peter I continued trying to combine both flags in different versions in different state spheres. The colours was fixed in the trade fleet.

In 1701, a new royal standard appeared — a black two-headed eagle on a golden ground. It was sometimes called the state flag as well. Thus, Peter I, along with the transformations of the state, transformed the symbolism, in which he expressed: “1) in white-blue-red — the transformation of Russia into a strong maritime power; 2) in the gold standard — its transformation into an empire; 3) in the St. Andrew's cross — its assertion as a Christian state” [2, p. 434].

By the end of the 18th century the army began to establish the heraldic colours of the imperial standard and coat of arms, i.e. black and gold. These traditionally Germanic colours were quite “native” for the Romanovs. Besides, these were the colours of Austria and Prussia, allied with Russia at that time. Therefore, in the first half of the 19th century there was some confusion with the national flag. Some countries, for example, France, perceived rather white-blue-red as a state, and some, such as Germany, — black-yellow-white one.

Thus, in general, the flags of the red spectrum (for example, the crimson one of Dmitry Pozharsky), or the flags with the cross became the battle banners and symbols of the country. White-blue-red was the flag of the trading fleet and mostly did not go beyond these frames. The colours did not touch the souls of the masses and were not accepted as symbols of the state and the people. Nobody really knew even the order of the stripes on them. Traditional images of saints and crosses evoked much stronger emotions. Nevertheless, the colors were of great importance in the Slavic world. Many flags of the Slavic countries are composed of the same colours in a different order. It should be noted that the flag did not play an important role in the popular consciousness at that moment.

Towards the end of the 19th century the meaning of the national flag was more or less comprehended. It became involved in public life and played a significant role in heraldic rituals. In 1883 the imperial Peter’s flag was revived. However, black-yellow-white did not give up its positions.

Officially, the question of national colours was raised in the second half of the 19th century. It was Baron B. N. Köhne, who launched it, introduced the black-yellow-white flag (according to the rules of German heraldry, the colours of the flag must match the colours of the coat of arms). Despite the fact that the white-blue-red won the battle, it remained state-administrative. In 1910–1912 some hesitations about both flags raised again.

It is obvious that Russia is characterized by rather contradictory features, the sphere of symbolism included. It was unable to fix the main direction of their development: either to follow traditional symbols and defend their identity, or to emphasize the ideas of the Christian state, or to strive to establish themselves as a power within the framework of the “European family”.

The long disputes came to the conclusion that neither black-yellow-white nor white-blue-red and Andrew’s had strict heraldic reason, historical basis and national memory. The first was decided to be of the state, the second — the trading fleet, the third — the naval. However, the government did not change the flag once more.

The new arrival of red flags is associated with fights. Red was the colour of the world revolution. But for Russia, that colour was dear and valuable, so the semantics of the new banner turned out to be mixed. During the period of the Provisional Government, the colours did not evoke any particular negative emotions in contrast to the coat of arms and anthem. The navy continued functioning with it. It was believed that it was the red flag that could raise the spirit of the army and the nation as a whole. However, it did not happen immediately. There were attempts to play with a variety of colours together with different symbols. In the summer of 1917, the flags of the White movement were created. It is the period of the usage of skulls and, in general, colours and signs with a very dark semantics. The White movement had almost refused red. However, it was the red flag that the future and the hopes of the people were connected with.

On July 10, 1918, the All-Russian Congress of Soviets approved a single red flag. The golden abbreviation — RSFSR or the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic was placed in the left corner of the red flag. Despite it, the traditions of drawing up flags were

preserved e.g. in the Navy (the image of a star in a white circle), and the eagle, without crowns, scepter and orb, did not completely disappear. There was also a sketch of the flag with an eagle clutching a hammer and sickle. The red flag became the basis for the flags of all Union republics. Initially, they differed almost only in the abbreviation on the dexter chief point. The flag of the unified state was red with a crossed hammer and sickle. After the Second World War, a “flag” reform was carried out. The banners of the Union republics were modified. In 1954, the flag of the RSFSR was approved: a blue stripe along the pole on a red field. Such a structural solution is not entirely “vexillological”, but outwardly it looked very worthy.

It should be remembered that the red flag, which for a long time had the function of consolidation for the multinational country, raising patriotic sentiments, symbolizing victory, had a significant impact on other nations and is a part of national history. It corresponded to the heraldic canons as the golden hammer and sickle were placed on a red background, in the heraldically honorable upper right corner, in the so-called “dexter chief”. Thus, the rule on the imposition of metal on colour (gold on red) is also observed.

The choice of the white-blue-red as the state flag seems rather strange. When changing the scale, the replacement of the old symbolism seems obvious, but the return to the older version is not entirely justified either. Our country is characterized by the tendency of easy borrowing of innovations. There is rather contradictory attitude towards the striped and red flags to these days. The white-blue-red flag is not heraldic, does not correspond to the colours of the coat of arms, does not have a clear semantics, did not function adequately as a state flag, discredited itself during the Second World War. For our country, sometimes it is quite typical to use foreign symbols unreasonably. This flag is borrowed. In addition, the Russians are characterized by certain traditionalism and fixed semantic set. It is probably the reason the new anthem, for example, was accepted so easily — the melody remained the same.

The red flag is associated with the Victory, space, the achievements and power of the USSR, even among those who are not its supporters, it is “beautiful”, it can be viewed the main national colour entered the sphere of archetypes with the positive semantics. And the colours associated, in many respects, with Vlasov, was not unambiguously identified due to the large number of similar ones, did not have any positive associations, does not have intelligible interpretations. Its main misfortune seems to be its bureaucracy, it was never truly national. The St. Andrew's flag, despite being also used by the Vlasov troops, avoided negative associations. Perhaps it was due to intense positive semantics. An interesting pattern was observed during the holidays. Lots of people bought the colours, but neither the order of the stripes nor the flag itself mattered to them. If someone had a red flag, or some red banner was hung out of the window during the May demonstrations, it made him an obvious adherent. So people were much more indifferent to the colours.

The Russian King of arms G. V. Wilinbakhov [2] gives several interpretations of the colour scheme of the flag. During the rule of Peter I, the symbolism of colours coincided with the ancient understanding of the structure of the world: the physical world (blood), heavenly (blue), divine (white). In the second half of the 19th century the stripes were given the meaning of the commonwealth of three East Slavic peoples: Russians (red), Belarusians (white), Ukrainians (blue). The symbolism of the red colour can be quite controversial, but it has always been “beautiful” for Russians and is the colour of ancient banners. It should also be noted that the striped white-blue-red flag did not play a significant role in important state events (wars, holidays, funerals of state officials). The flag of St. Andrew overshadowed the colours. The Russian national flag was better known abroad. It became the basis for the flags

of many Slavic countries. The state flag acquired political weight only by the end of the 19th century.

So vexilloids are quite prominent type of semiotics. In semantics and pragmatics flags are quite close to coat of arms, although still less productive. Mostly it is possible to distinguish functions of identification, possession, record, regulation. Some of the typical heraldic functions are less presented in flags. Such as of social deixis is manifested mostly in the bearer of the flag or position in space. Artistic function, brightly presented in heraldry, in vexillology is shown in less sophisticated way. Surely the main function is identification which concentrates the whole idea of vexilloids. Possession is presented in composition of the design and place of the flag. Historical events are manifested in some signs used or subsequent semantics within the society. Generally flags regulate socio-cultural relations.

They help to identify people and countries in space and time. In the sphere of historical and cultural studies banners give the opportunity of attribution and proper analysis. They accumulate information about the bearer.

There is something in common in Russia and Britain such as the colours of the state vexilloids (white, blue, red) and special reverence for the St. Andrew's flag. British flags are heraldic, consistent in their semantics and pragmatics. The semiosphere is always sensitive to the slightest changes in the political and economic situation. Our tossing in these spheres is reflected in the instability of vexillological issues.

Mostly there are no strict rules in this area, and it is less sophisticated than heraldry. It relates to both countries under analysis. At least in Britain it is quite stable, whereas in Russia, it is more chaotic in all the aspects of interpretation, composition, attribution etc.

However, in the light of the events of 2014 and later in Ukraine, reunion with the Crimea, the Olympic Games in Sochi and Russia's foreign policy in general, we witness an increase in the prestige of the Russian colours. Actively used in those days, it has become a symbol of power, victory and brotherhood. Perhaps it will help to consolidate the positive semantics and make it truly popular.

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