

Arthur William Etchells III: The Swiss Guard of the Popes – flags and uniforms and their inter-relations

The early period 1506-1806

Abstract: *In 2006 the Swiss Guard of the Pope celebrated their five hundredth anniversary. The bright red, yellow and blue uniform is familiar to many throughout the world. The red yellow and blue flag with the Swiss cross of the unit is also familiar to many. But has it always been so? In this paper we will discuss the development of both the flag and the uniforms with emphasis on the inter-relations between the colors and how they have changed from pope to pope. The present antique look of flag and uniform is of rather recent vintage. A parallel paper will discuss the development of the guard's flag from 1806 to the present day.*

Introduction

The year 2006 was the five hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Pontifical Swiss Guard; the army of the Pope. The official name in Italian is the Pontificali Svizzera Guardia. The multi-lingual Swiss also use “le Garde Suisse” and “die Schweizergarde”. In Latin the official title is “Pontificia Helvetiorum Cohors”. The troops in their bright antique uniforms of blue, yellow and red with steel helmets and halberds are familiar to most of the public.



Their complex flag with a white central cross and horizontal stripes of blue, yellow and red is less familiar to the public but should be familiar to many vexillologists even though it is a military rather than a national flag. The sharp eye will note the relation of the colors of the flag and the uniform.

In this paper we will look into what the early flags and uniforms were like and the relations between

them and how they reflected the mores and customs of the time in military practice. We will cover the period from the beginning to the early eighteen hundreds. The flags of the modern period and related flags will be covered by my colleague Dr. Emil Dreyer of Switzerland. I will discuss the uniforms of that period. The current or “modern” uniform is basically unchanged and has been in use since 1914, so is approaching its centenary.

A short history

As is true of much involving vexillology we must begin with some history. There are a number of recent excellent reviews on the history of Swiss Guard in a number of languages and most of them are listed in the bibliography [9] [11] [14] [20] [21]. Nonetheless we touch on a number key events relative to uniforms and flags. Appendix 2 contains a time line for quick reference.

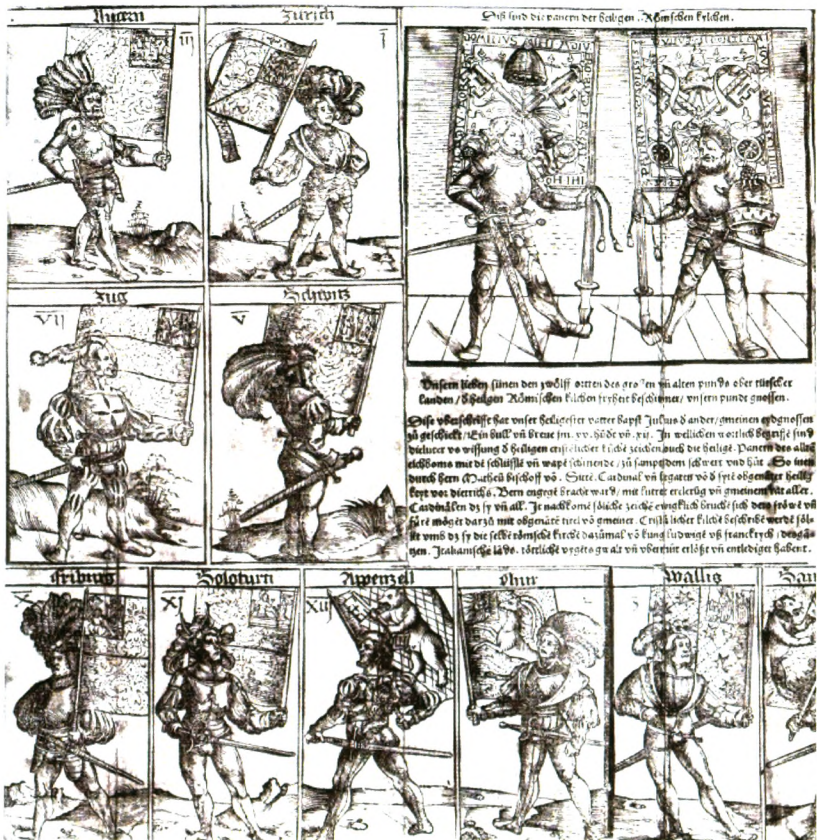
The hiring of the Swiss

The Swiss had become popular as mercenaries in the armies of Europe since their defeat of the Burgundian army of Charles the Bold in 1476. Swiss had probably served in the armies of the Borgia pope, Alexander VI, under his son Cesare Borgia and even earlier. Swiss were the predominate infantry regiments in the French army of the time and when Julius II became pope he called on the Swiss whom he had seen while serving in France. An agreement was signed in 1505 with the Confederates as the Swiss were known at the time and in early 1506 the Swiss appeared in Rome and a group of about one hundred formed the Swiss Guard of the Pope. In this Pope Julius was copying the French kings who had set up a personal guard of one hundred Swiss (Cent Suisse) in 1453 which was to last to the French Revolution. The Papal Swiss would number between about one hundred throughout history.

The first Swiss Papal Flags – the Julius-Banners

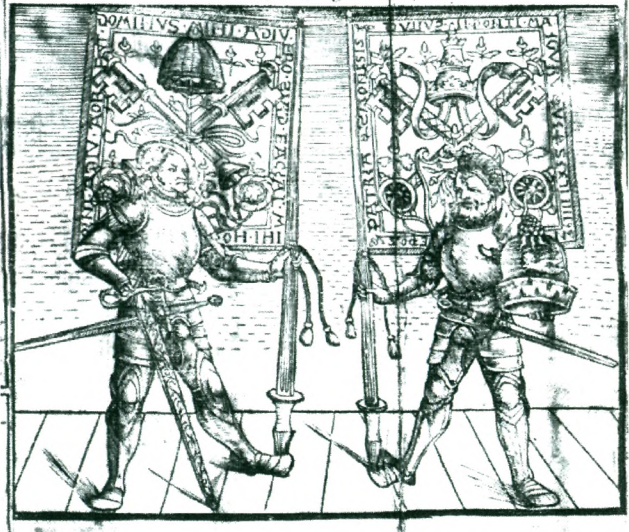
Shortly after hiring the Swiss, the pope sent many of the cantons a number of religious textile pictures which were then mounted in the upper staff corner of the cantonal flags. Many of these pictures still

exist so we know what they looked liked. They were painted images of saints and often decorated with pearls. They are miniature works of art and are preserved in many Swiss cantonal museums. Perhaps these can be considered the first flags of the Swiss in Papal service. A woodblock print shows in the outer ring soldiers in typical Swiss costume holding these banners.



Another Swiss papal flag

Also as part of this famous wood cut there is a picture of two Swiss soldiers carrying two flags or the obverse and reverse of one flag as an artistic license. There are two flags not two sides of one



flag. One is the flag of the Church, presumably red with the gold and silver keys and the arms of Pope Julius II on a blue field with a gold tree. This was the recognized coat of arms of the Church through the middle ages and appears in a number of books. These arms are still on the current Swiss Guard flag to be discussed by Dr. Dreyer. The other flag is of the Gonfaloniere de Chiesa, the standard bearer of the Church and thus the commander of the Church's temporal territorial armies. According to Galbreath ^[1] this was to be given to a Duke of Urbino who refused it and thus was given to the Swiss. It looks like the same flag except for the umbrella, the sign of the Gonfaloniere. It is also presumably red with gold decorations with a yellow and red striped umbrella. A red vertical "pale" often appears on the arms of the gonfaloniere with the keys and the umbrella.

The sack of Rome

There were two events in this early period in which the Swiss Guard played a major part. In May of 1527 an army consisting of unpaid Spanish and German troops of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V broke into Rome. Essentially leaderless than sacked the city for several days. On May 6 the Swiss Guard of Pope Leo X held off the marauders

while the Pope escaped from the Vatican to Castel San Angelo. One hundred and forty seven of the Swiss died while forty two escaped with the Pope. This has become an importance remembrance day to the Guard to this day.

The battle of Lepanto

In 1570 a contingent of Swiss Guards participated in the sea battle of Lepanto when a joint Christian fleet defeated a Turkish one and regained dominance of the Mediterranean. The troops were acting as a bodyguard to the commander of the Papal galleys Marcantonio Colonna.

That was pretty much the end of the military adventures of the Papal Swiss Guard. For the next several years they concentrated on protecting the popes from the conflicts that tore through Italy and Europe.

Before we plunge further into the history of the flags let us review the patterns in flags and uniforms of the time.

Striped flags

The striped flag appeared in the late fourteen hundreds and early fifteen hundreds. It coincided with the increase of infantry as a more effective weapon in the art of war. The Swiss led this revolution in tactics but not in vexillology. They continued to carry their cantonal flags with their strong heraldic motifs. It is in Germany where the landsknechts were raised to copy and adapt the Swiss tactics that we first see striped flags often with a cross of Burgundy for Hapsburg Spain and Germany or with a white cross for the French. Invariably the stripes were horizontal and the number much larger than three. The colors may have been the livery colors of the colonel of the regiment or unit. It appears that the early Swiss Guard flag copied this pattern. The flags of the Swiss as was often true of flags of the time were made of a brocade cloth i.e. a silk fabric in two shades or finishes of a single color so that a subtle repeat pattern can be seen. This pattern can be seen in the illustration of the Julius banner. The current flag of the Guard contains such fabric in several colors.



Livery colors

Livery colors became popular in the middle and late fourteen hundreds. Livery was the custom of a lord providing clothes to his retainers both commoners and nobles. The clothes were often of a uniform set of colors. In many courts both royal and ducal various groups were given different colors as in the court of the Valois dukes of Burgundy. Since retainers often included soldiers these would often be all in the same colors. At the same time badges became popular as a way of distinguishing one's retainers. Badges were animals or plants or the like that were chosen by a person or a house as a distinctive mark over and above the coat of arms. In the War of the Roses badges became very popular to distinguish foot troops. We know of many livery colors of the participants of the Wars of the Roses and also of the English kings of the periods. The livery colors of the French kings are also known and that of a few French nobles. In modern heraldic practice the livery colors are related to the colors and metals of the coats of arms. Since these were often worn by non-noble people, duller versions of the colors are substituted. In particular gray is substituted for white and murrey as dark red for the brighter heraldic red. This was certainly not the practice in the middle ages as the colors of the French kings have no bearing to the coat of arms of France and are often a sequence of three colors. For example that of Louis XII was white, green and pink and that of the count of Charolais heir to Burgundy was black and

violet. The livery colors of the English kings include blue in some cases and green and white for the Tudors.

The Swiss confederation also started to adopt similar colors but having no colonels the troops started to wear clothes in the color of their canton. So in the contemporary drawings of the time, most notably those of Diebold Schilling, we start to see troops from Lucerne and Zurich wearing bits of blue and from Bern in red and yellow. We can see in the illustration 5 that while not a complete uniform there was an attempt at uniformity driven more by the men's desire to show their allegiance.



The German troops, the landsknechts, seem to delight in a wild array of colors with little uniformity unless that was forced from above as with personal guards. These troops were the sworn enemies of the Swiss and like enemies they copied one another in many things. The Swiss Guard usually followed landsknecht trends and patterns in costume.

The Italian popes seemed to prefer livery colors based on the chief colors of their coats of arms. The livery colors of the Borgia popes are given as green, yellow and red or yellow and red. These are colors found in the Borgia arms. The Farnese used blue and yellow from their

arms and the Medici red and yellow and sometimes red, blue and yellow. We will then see these livery colors appearing in the uniforms of the Swiss Guard.

Colors

The current colors used by the Swiss Guard in uniforms and flags are known to all. A bright blue, a bright red and a yellow that is almost orange. Over the centuries when these colors were used the shades changed considerably. The red was always bright but during the late eighteenth hundreds the blue was quite dark and the yellow a more canary yellow than orange. Even the



early uniforms of the current pattern were made with a yellow, less orange than today. Perhaps they were still using the stocks of fabric from the earlier costume. The change occurred in the 1920s. In addition in the eighteenth hundreds a dark red tape about two centimeters wide was used on the seams of the coat and along the



edges in the manner of livery lace on servants' uniforms of the time. Woven into this tape in a yellow thread were the cross keys and tiara and the coats of arms of the current pope. I observed at least three different types of this lace.

Uniforms and costumes

Uniforms were usually variants of every day wear in which all men in a unit wore pretty much the same thing. In the early middle ages there were no uniforms. The first uniform clothing of an army was the use of livery discussed earlier.

The discussion of costume and particularly of uniforms is very complex. Many languages use similar words for the same and different items. The meanings of words have also shifted with the centuries. For a general discussion of early Swiss and landsknecht uniforms the section in the Osprey booklet on Landksnechts by John Richards [19] is the most complete. I will define some terms to make the discussion easier. We will define hose as the garment worn on the legs stretching from near the waist to and often including the foot. It was usually rather tight fitting and could be single or multi-colored. Breeches start at the waist and can cover the hose reaching anywhere from the middle of the thigh to the ankle. Breeches tended to be fuller then the hose. Often the breeches were quite full and held up with separate vertical straps which we will call tapes of a contrasting color and pattern. This particular style was popular with the landsknechts and was called pluderhose.

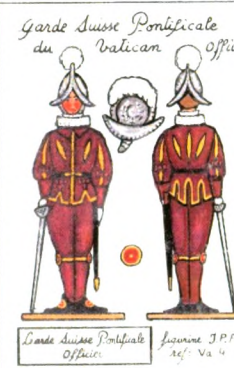
Over the years the thing that seemed to change most was the length of the breeches. They extended to just below the knee as they are today to very far above the knee forming what are called trunk hose. The breeches were often much more baggy then today and were often pulled out from between the tapes giving a very droopy appearance. The width of the tapes also changed. Through the first hundred years, the fifteen hundreds, the uniform of the Swiss matched that of other active armies. In the sixteen hundreds the uniforms were a bit old-fashioned. Towards the end of the sixteen hundreds longer coats with skirts covering the breeches became popular in civilian and military life and the costume of the Guards was definitely antique and was called such in contemporary documents.

The "modern" or "current" uniform

It seems ludicrous to refer to a uniform unchanged over nearly the last hundred years and based on motifs going even more centuries back as modern so I will use the work current for the uniform of today.

This particular version of the uniform dates to 1914 and was codified by the Guard Commandant of the time, Jules Repond. The historical background and precedents are discussed in his book [18]. The Repond uniform is basically unchanged to the present time. The colors are those of the Medici popes and have been in use for several hundred years. The sleeves are puffed at the upper arm and the breeches are also puffed above the knee. The puffed material is solid red. Over this red material there are bands or tapes of yellow and blue attached at top and bottom. The jacket is striped blue and yellow. The stockings or leg wear and the sleeves are striped blue and yellow and the cuffs are red. From a distance the uniform often appears to be blue and yellow with the red peeking out on occasion. White gloves are usually worn.

Under most circumstances a black beret set at a sharp angle is worn. On formal occasions a black or silvered morion type metal helmet is worn. The color of the plume denotes rank with the majority wearing red plumes. There are a variety of collars depending on the formality varying from a simple linen fall collar to a very formal folded lace ruff. The everyday uniform is all blue with the black beret. There is an amazing variety of uniforms for a unit of only one hundred men and officers. Some of this is due to the several styles of dress: gala, gran gala and piccolo tenue while the differences in officers, under-officers and drummers uniforms add to variety. This variety is well captured in the illustration which though a painting guide for miniatures gives a clear nice picture of the variety.



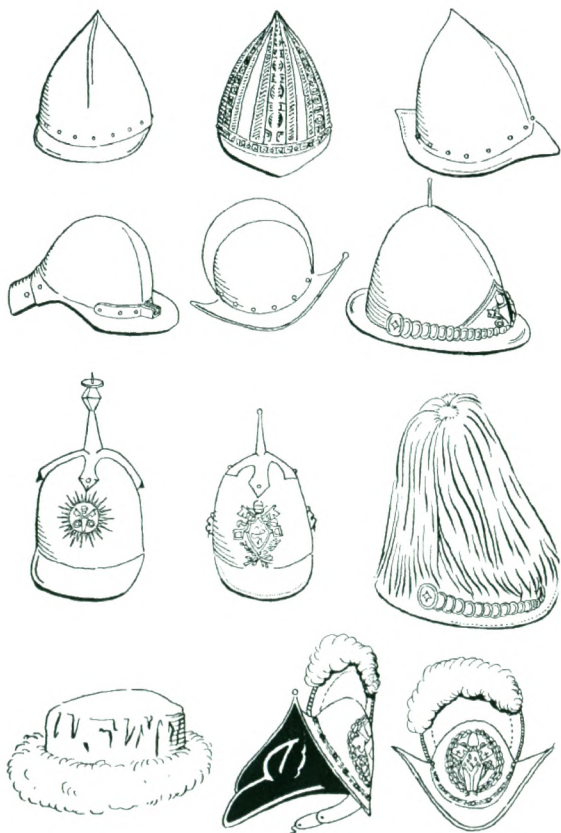
Officer Uniforms

We will devote most of our discussion to the uniforms of the enlisted men. The officers in general did not wear the same uniforms as the men but did wear clothes of similar cut but in the colors of black and

red, often a dark red. A tradition followed even today by the under-officers. They wear a black jacket with dark red pants and dark red tapes and stocking. The commandant wears an all dark red uniform with slashes through which small bits of green silk are seen. There are a few exceptions to this over the centuries. In the mid-eighteen hundreds we see prints of officers wearing all red uniforms and occasionally light blue uniforms. There is even a picture of an officer in an all white uniform. In the guards of the French and Prussian kings we also see officers completely dressed in white.

Headgear

The Guards have worn a tremendous variety of head gear over the centuries. The style of the hats often mirrored the popular trends of the



day in both civilian and military wear. The early hats were the floppy oversize berets favored by the Swiss and landsknechts, often with plumes. When tricornes (three cornered hats) became popular a black tricorne was often worn when bicornes became popular then black bicornes were worn. In the 1800s top hats were even worn. Small "pork pie" hats similar to those worn by the Warders of the Guard of the Tower

of London were popular for a time. All were worn with the antique uniform despite the incongruity.

Metal helmets were popular for ceremonial occasions from the early days. They were often ornamented with gold monograms and elaborate papal coats of arms. Sometimes they had chin straps and sometimes not. When spiked helmets were popular the helmets had spikes often obscured by tall drooping plumes. The current classic morion-style helmet with crest and peaks front and back is not seen in any early pictures of the Guard but was a very popular type of helmet during the late 1500s. The helmets shown in early illustrations tend to be smaller and more close fitting. Commandant Repond discusses the choice of this helmet for his new uniform extensively in his book [18] but the pictorial evidence is scanty.

Armor and weapons

Throughout the ages the Swiss Guard on ceremonial occasions wore half armor very similar to what is worn today. Chest and back plates and on the arms were standard. Similarly the most popular weapon was the tall halberd with an ax as head. Underofficers carried a shorter shafted weapon with a spear or leaf as head.

Drummers

In early armies the fifers and drummers were used to give signals and were attached to the officer staff. In many armies they wore a modified uniform of the rest of the troops in terms of reversed colors or special lace attached. Often the colors were those of the colonel of the regiment rather than a regimental uniform colors. This is true also of the Swiss Guard where the fifers and drummers wear yellow and black predominately. In pictures it is hard to distinguish blue from black. It is obvious that the red has been replaced by black and that the plumes are black and yellow as are the rims of the drums. The tapes however seem to be blue and yellow. As far as I can tell the colors have been black and yellow for the last century and no longer change with the livery colors of individual colonels. Black and yellow were the livery colors of the Pfyffer family which supplied several colonels. In contrast the

Guard band wears regular uniforms and includes some officers in there distinctive red uniforms.

Some comments on sources

All the books on the flags and uniforms of the Swiss Guard are from modern times i.e. the last hundred years. Historical information on the earlier period must depend on the few written comments of diarists of the time such as ambassadors or chamberlains or on pictorial evidence. This latter is ample in the form of paintings and frescoes and in general is the primary source for the information contained in this article. The recent books have reproduced many of the contemporary paintings showing processions where the uniforms and flags can be picked out. Usually these paintings are contemporary made shortly after the events depicted. Other paintings of the Guard for historical purposes were made many years after the events and are suspect. There is a picture of the Swiss at the Sack of Rome wearing uniforms of the modern style. Even contemporary pictures may be untrustworthy as the artist is often interested in other things than the detail of a flag or uniform. There are three pictures



or prints often reproduced from the Swiss National Museum



collection showing guardsmen of the period of 1787 (the date is on the picture). One wears a uniform of blue and yellow and red very similar to modern colors but the other two have white instead of blue. Is this a real color scheme or did some printer forget to add the blue, perhaps to save money or has the blue pigment faded

over the years. Thus there is a bit of uncertainty to our descriptions and it is possible that others hopefully intrigued by the topic would unearth contradictory information.

A survey of flags and uniforms

(Appendix 1 gives a list of popes and what we know of the colors of the uniforms and flags of their Swiss Guards.)

The uniforms of first Swiss Guard under Julius II are unknown. The regular Swiss contingent undoubtedly carried the cantonal flags with the Julius cantons. They would then be in color coordinated regular military costume. It is suggested by some that since they were from Zurich and Lucerne they wore blue and white the cantonal colors and carried blue and white flags. Castella suggests they wore red the church livery color and the art director of the 1965 film

the *Agony and the Ecstasy*

about the battle between

Michelangelo and Julius II

dressed them in blue and

yellow cassocks with

red berets and

stockings. At the

present time we just

do not know. With the

next pope Leo X a

Medici we have

conflicting information.

A Maiolica plate shows the

Pope in procession with

troops in Swiss costume tight

with tight fitting breeches striped red,

white and green though some of the troops also wear red and yellow. These appear to be officers. The flags are all yellow with the red balls of the Medici. The plate is most remarkable for the elephant also depicted which pins the pope down to Leo X ¹⁵¹. The next Pope, a German has

troops described as wearing green, white and yellow. These are prominent colors in his coat of arms ¹⁵³. Clement VII is another Medici

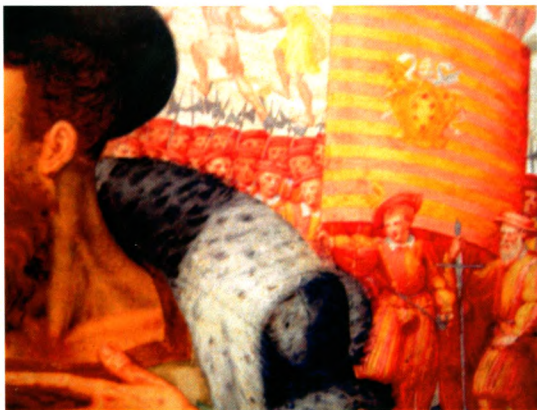
pope and his troops are seen wearing the baggy pluddenhose in red and yellow and carrying a red and yellow flag with twenty horizontal stripes

with the pope's arms in the center. This was presumably the uniforms



wore at the Sack of Rome.

Another painting dated 1529 shows a plain red flag with the pope's arms. The troops wear baggy hose of yellow with blue tapes and there is another man in fancier all red velvet with a breast plate. But given that this is after the Sack of Rome these may not even be Swiss.

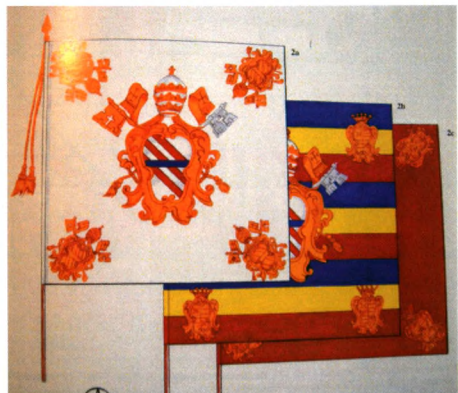


Pope Paul III was of the Farnese family and his troops wear yellow with blue tapes, red caps and yellow and blue plumes. Pope Paul IV of the Carafa family wear the red and white of his family arms. By 1566 and Pius V we are back to red and yellow and a red and yellow striped flag. In 1585 under Sixtus V the flag has six horizontal stripes of yellow, blue and red with the Pope's arms in the center. As the years go by red, yellow and blue become the most common colors. Usually the baggy



breeches are of red stuff with blue and yellow tapes. This is the period of the great processional paintings and we see small indistinct figures of guardsmen flanking horses and carriages. Often they wear helmets and breastplates, at the time an antique style. Occasionally the tapes appear to be of three colors with a dark possibly blue center flanked by two gold or yellow vertically stripes. During the sixteen hundreds the red is very prominent as the breeches are very baggy and the red hangs out between the tapes. Under Pope Clement XII we have a flag of nine stripes in blue, yellow and red with the papal arms in the center and in each corner a cartouche of possibly the colonel's arms.

Confusion returns during the reign of Pope Pius VI. Some plates dated 1789 show a Guard in almost current red, yellow and blue costume though with a bicorne. But two other plates show similar uniforms but in yellow red and white. The Pope's arms were yellow, white and red



with a bit of green. Whether there was a change during the reign or a mistake by the colorist we do not know.



In the beginning of the eighteen hundreds the uniform now looks like the current uniform with the exception of the very Napoleonic looking helmet with its caterpillar plume. The flag of this period will be discussed by Dr. Emil Dreyer in another paper in this collection. We will finish off the uniforms with some very distinct departures from the familiar current style. In the eighteen twenties the breeches became

voluminous and the tapes very wide and red patches started to appear on the uniform. They seem to stick out from the rest of the uniform in a random manner. The hat at



the time looked like the formal top hats of a later period. We start to see livery lace around the front seam. This costume lasts to the Unification of Italy and after that the uniform takes on a more French military look with shoulder roles. The major color is a very dark blue relieved by the dark red livery lace around all edges and in several vertical rows on the jacket. The red breeches are barely visible peeping out from between the yellow and dark tapes. This is the costume until Commandant Repond reintroduced his version of the antique uniform.



Other flags seen with the Swiss Guard

The Guard is occasionally seen carrying the yellow and white flag of the Vatican State. In addition the Guard quarter is decorated on many days with the Swiss national flag and many Swiss cantonal flags.

Other Swiss guards

In the seventeen hundreds many royal rulers had Swiss Guards, most likely copying the French king rather than the Popes. The number was typically set at one hundred again copying the French “cent suisse”. It was also popular to dress them in “antique” uniforms for special occasions as well as more contemporary uniforms for ordinary wear. The antique uniforms were the landsknecht “pluderhosen” with its baggy legwear and flapping tapes. In addition to the French, there were Prussian, Saxon, Savoy and even Dutch. Again the colors were livery colors and in some cases the uniforms were decorated with a pattern of

attached tapes in a special livery design such as the white chain of the Bourbons as shown in the accompanying illustration.



Conclusions

In summary with only a few exceptions the Guard wore red, yellow and blue with striped flags of the same colors bearing the pope's arms and often the arms of the commander of the Guard at that time. Many popes had short reigns and the uniform of his Swiss Guard was not of primary importance. Only when the pope's had long reigns or were involved in events worth recording on canvas do we have information. It is also interesting to note that if one looks over the arms of the popes such as at Arnaud Bunel's web site the colors of red, yellow and blue are very common even with popes who were not Medici.

Of course while this survey is as complete as the current available sources can justify there are probably more paintings and memoirs not readily available with additional information.



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29. 26-Knoetel Uniformkunde – uniform plates from Germany
30. <http://www.grosser-generalstab.de/adjutant.html>

31. 27-Wikipedia – an earlier version was the source of the list of Popes in the Appendix but it has been much changed.

DVD

Soldiers of the Pope Vision Video 2005

Appendix 1 – List of the Popes and colors of flags and Uniforms

The following is a list of popes, their dates, English name, regnal(Latin) name, personal name and place of birth with some notes. Uniform is the base color first followed by color of tapes. The type of uniform is of the "pluderbosen" or traditional type. Sometimes the officer's uniform is given if it is other than a black top with "regimental" pants.

Flags of more than one color consist of number of horizontal stripes. The first color is the top stripe. The number of stripes are given when known.

Code: W=Walpen (r23) , S=Serrano (r22), K=Kreig (r14), C=Cassella(r8), D=Durrer (r10), B=Bedini(r5) (a number means the reference has a color picture.

AD 1500-today

22 September 1503 to 18 October 1503 Pope Pius III Papa Pius Tertius, Episcopus Romanus Francesco Todeschini Piccolomini, Siena, Tuscany, Italy. Nephew of Pius II – troops in red, white and green W100

31 October 1503 to 21 February 1513 Pope Julius II Papa Julius Secundus, Episcopus Romanus Giuliano della Rovere Albisola, Savona, Italy. Nephew of Sixtus IV; Convened the Fifth Council of the Lateran, 1512

Founded the Swiss Guard

Uniform – ?

Flag –red (?) the keys of St Peter. blue and yellow (S)

9 March 1513 to 1 December 1521 Pope Leo X Papa Leo Decimus, Episcopus Romanus Giovanni di Lorenzo de' Medici, Florence, Italy. Son of Lorenzo the Magnificent

uniform – red, yellow and blue – landsknecht green white and red and some yellow B

9 January 1522 to 14 September 1523 Pope Adrian VI Papa Hadrianus Sextus, Episcopus Romanus Adriaan Florensz Dedel, Utrecht, The Holy Roman Empire of German nation (presently The Netherlands). Only Dutch Pope, and because today's Netherlands then were a part of Germany by many considered the last German pope until 2005; last non-Italian Pope until 1978

uniform=green, white, yellow (C,/D))

26 November 1523 to 25 September 1534 Pope Clement VII Papa Clemens Septimus, Episcopus Romanus Giulio di Giuliano de' Medici, Florence, Italy. Rome plundered by imperial troops ("Sacco di Roma"), 1527

uniform=upper red, yellow lower red, yellow

flag= red, Medici arms S113 flag red with yellow and red stripes

13 October 1534 to 10 November 1549 Pope Paul III Papa Paulus Tertius, Episcopus Romanus Alessandro Farnese, Canino, Viterbo, Italy. Opened the Council of Trent in 1545

uniform= blue yellow (K) yellow blue tapes, red cap blue and yellow plumes and stockings

7 February 1550 to 23 March 1555 Pope Julius III Papa Iulius Tertius, Episcopus Romanus Giovanni Maria Ciochi del Monte, Rome, Italy.

9 April 1555 to April 30 or 1 May 1555 Pope Marcellus II Papa Marcellus Secundus, Episcopus Romanus Marcello Cervini Montefano, Macerata, Italy.

23 May 1555 to 18 August 1559 Pope Paul IV Papa Paulus Quartus, Episcopus Romanus Giovanni Pietro Carafa, Capriglia, Campania, Italy.

Uniform=white and red (K)

25 December 1559 to 9 December 1565 Pope Pius IV Papa Pius Quartus, Episcopus Romanus Giovanni Angelo Medici, Milan, Italy. Reopened the Council of Trent, 1562, it concluded its proceedings in 1563

7 January 1566 to 1 May 1572 Pope Pius V Saint Pius Papa Pius Quintus, Episcopus Romanus Michele Ghislieri Bosco, Alessandria, Italy. Victory of Lepanto 1571

Uniform= red, yellow

Flag= red, yellow stripes S113

13 May 1572 to 10 April 1585 Pope Gregory XIII Papa Gregorius Tertius Decimus, Episcopus Romanus Ugo Boncompagni, Bologna, Italy. Reform of the calendar 1582

24 April 1585 to 27 August 1590 Pope Sixtus V Papa Xystus Quintus, Episcopus Romanus Felice Peretti Grottammare, Marche, Italy.

Uniform=

flag=yellow, red, yellow, blue, yellow, red stripes -S

15 September 1590 to 27 September 1590 Pope Urban VII Papa Urbanus Septimus, Episcopus Romanus Giovanni Battista Castagna, Rome, Italy.

5 December 1590 to 15 /16 October 1591 Pope Gregory XIV Papa Gregorius Quartus Decimus, Episcopus Romanus Nicolò Sfondrati, Cremona, Lombardy, Italy.

29 October 1591 to 30 December 1591 Pope Innocent IX Papa Innocentius Nonus, Episcopus Romanus Giovanni Antonio Facchinetti, Bologna, Italy.

30 January 1592 to 3 March 1605 Pope Clement VIII Papa Clemens Octavus, Episcopus Romanus Ippolito Aldobrandini Fano, Marche, Italy.

Uniform= red, blue and gold -S

1 April 1605 to 27 April 1605 Pope Leo XI Papa Leo Undecimus, Episcopus Romanus Alessandro Ottaviano de' Medici, Florence, Italy.

16 May 1605 to 28 January 1621 Pope Paul V Papa Paulus Quintus, Episcopus Romanus Camillo Borghese, Rome, Italy.

9 February 1621 to 8 July 1623 Pope Gregory XV Papa Gregorius Quintus Decimus, Episcopus Romanus Alessandro Ludovisi Bologna, Italy

6 August 1623 to 29 July 1644 Pope Urban VIII Papa Urbanus Octavus, Episcopus Romanus Maffeo Barberini, Florence, Italy Trial against Galileo Galilei
uniform=Red, blue and gold same as Clement VIII red tabards

15 September 1644 to 7 January 1655 Pope Innocent X Papa Innocentius Decimus, Episcopus Romanus Giovanni Battista Pamphili, Rome, Italy.
Uniform=red, yellow and dark blue or black , red capes, black hats or hatless officers red and black

7 April 1655 to 22 May 1667 Pope Alexander VII Papa Alexander Septimus, Episcopus Romanus Fabio Chigi, Siena, Tuscany, Italy. Blue and yellow?

20 June 1667 to 9 December 1669 Pope Clement IX Papa Clemens Nonus, Episcopus Romanus Giulio Rospigliosi, Pistoia, Tuscany, Italy.

29 April 1670 to 22 July 1676 Pope Clement X Papa Clemens Decimus, Episcopus Romanus Emilio Altieri, Rome, Italy.

21 September 1676 to 11/12 August 1689 Pope Innocent XI
Blessed Innocent Papa Innocentius Undecimus, Episcopus Romanus Benedetto Odescalchi, Como, Lombardy, Italy.

6 October 1689 to 1 February 1691 Pope Alexander VIII Papa Alexander Octavus, Episcopus Romanus Pietro Vito Ottoboni, Padova, Veneto, Italy

12 July 1691 to 27 September 1700 Pope Innocent XII Papa Innocentius Duodecimus, Episcopus Romanus Antonio Pignatelli Spinazzola, Puglia, Italy.

23 November 1700 to 19 March 1721 Pope Clement XI Papa Clemens Undecimus, Episcopus Romanus Giovanni Francesco Albani, Urbino, Marche, Italy.
Uniform= red, light blue and yellow (K/SLM print)

8 May 1721 to 7 March 1724 Pope Innocent XIII Papa Innocentius Tertius Decimus, Episcopus Romanus Michelangelo de 'Conti; Michael Angelo Conti Poli, Lazio, Italy.
Uniform=Red, blue and gold same as Clement VIII

29 May 1724 to 21 February 1730 Pope Benedict XIII Papa Benedictus Tertius Decimus, Episcopus Romanus Pierfrancesco Orsini, Gravina, Puglia, Italy.

12 July 1730 to 6 February 1740 Pope Clement XII Papa Clemens Duodecimus, Episcopus Romanus Lorenzo Corsini, Florence, Italy.
Uniform=

Flag= blue, yellow, red, nine stripes arms of pope in center and cartouche with crowned arms in corners in gold (colonel?). A T102

17 August 1740 to 3 May 1758 Pope Benedict XIV Papa Benedictus Quartus Decimus, Episcopus Romanus Prospero Lorenzo Lambertini, Bologna, Italy.
Uniform = red yellow blue, captain black and red

6 July 1758 to 2 February 1769 Pope Clement XIII Papa Clemens Tertius Decimus, Episcopus Romanus Carlo della Torre Rezzonico Venice, Veneto, Italy

19 May 1769 to 22 September 1774 Pope Clement XIV Papa Clemens Quartus Decimus, Episcopus Romanus Giovanni Vincenzo Antonio Ganganelli, Sant'Arcangelo di Romagna, Italy.

15 February 1775 to 29 August 1799 Pope Pius VI Papa Pius Sextus, Episcopus Romanus Giovanni Angelo Braschi, Cesena, Italy.
Uniform=red,yellow blue – red, white and yellow (K, SLM plate)

14 March 1800 to 20 August 1823 Pope Pius VII Papa Pius Septimus, Episcopus Romanus Barnaba Chiaramonti, Cesena, Italy.
Uniform – red, blue and yellow (plate)

28 September 1823 to 10 February 1829 Pope Leo XII Papa Leo Duodecimus, Episcopus Romanus Annibale Sermattei della Genga Fabriano, Marche, Italy
flag= blue,yellow, red,blue, yellow, red (Crociani)

31 March 1829 to 1 December 1830 Pope Pius VIII Papa Pius Octavus, Episcopus Romanus Francesco Saverio Castiglioni Cingoli, Marche, Italy.
Uniform= red, yellow, blue drummers all red off-light blue
flag= yellow, red, blue

2 February 1831 to 1 June 1846 Pope Gregory XVI Papa Gregorius Sextus Decimus, Episcopus Romanus Bartolomeo Alberto Cappellari Belluno, Veneto, Italy.
Uniform=blue, yellow, red (C)
flag= nine stripes two arms in circles 1 blue, red and yellow

16 June 1846 to 7 February 1878 Pope Pius IX Blessed Pius IX Papa Pius Nonus, Episcopus Romanus Giovanni Maria Mastai-Ferretti Senigallia, Marche, Italy Opened First Vatican Council; lost the Papal States to Italy. Longest serving pope in history
Uniform= red, yellow, blue stripes
Flag= red, yellow, blue- three stripes (S)
Blue, yellow, red nine stripes with Pope's arms and colonel's arms one above the other (A T109) also blue, red, yellow nine stripes
Blue, yellow, red three stripes with (ref:Becker figure 10 and 11 1986) also small Swiss shield

20 February 1878 to 20 July 1903 Pope Leo XIII Papa Leo Tertius Decimus, Episcopus Romanus Gioacchino Vincenzo Raffaele Luigi Pecci, Carpineto Romano, Latium, Italy.

Flag=nine stripes – popes arms on one side white, red, yellow see note in K

4 August 1903-20 August 1914 Saint Pius X Papa Pius Decimus, Episcopus Romanus Giuseppe Melchiorre Sarto Riese, Treviso, Veneto, Italy.

Flag nine stripes nine stripes blue, red, orange yellow with two coats of arms – Pope over commandant (ref:B figure 9 1986) Blue/red/yellow -S

Early uniform with livery lace.

1910 -1914 Begin Repond uniform design continues to present day

3 September 1914 to 22 January 1922 Pope Benedict XV Papa Benedictus Quintus Decimus, Episcopus Romanus Giacomo Della Chiesa, Genoa, Italy.

6 February 1922 to 10 February 1939 Pope Pius XI Papa Pius Undecimus, Episcopus Romanus Achille Ambrogio Damiano Ratti Desio, Milan, Italy. Signed the Lateran Treaty with Italy, establishing the Vatican City as a sovereign state.

2 March 1939 to 9 October 1958 Pope Pius XII Venerable Pius XII Papa Pius Duodecimus, Episcopus Romanus Eugenio Maria Giuseppe Giovanni Pacelli, Rome, Italy.

28 October 1958 to 3 June 1963 Pope John XXIII Blessed John XXIII Papa Ioannes Vicesimus Tertius, Episcopus Romanus Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, Sotto il Monte, Bergamo, Italy. Opened Second Vatican Council; sometimes called "Good Pope John"

21 June 1963 to 6 August 1978 Pope Paul VI Servant of God Paul VI Papa Paulus Sextus, Episcopus Romanus Giovanni Battista Enrico Antonio Maria Montini, Concesio, Brescia, Italy. The last pope to be crowned with the Papal Tiara.

26 August 1978 to 28 September 1978 Pope John Paul I Servant of God John Paul I Papa Ioannes Paulus Primus, Episcopus Romanus Albino Luciani Forno di Canale (now Canale d'Agordo), Veneto, Italy. First Pope to use 'the First' in regnal name. First pope with two names, for his two immediate predecessors.

16 October 1978 to 2 April 2005 Pope John Paul II John Paul the Great Servant of God John Paul II Papa Ioannes Paulus Secundus, Episcopus Romanus Karol Józef Wojtyła, Wadowice, Poland. First Polish pope and first non-Italian pope since Pope Adrian VI in 1523. Reputedly canonized more saints than all predecessors. The longest serving Pope since Pius IX (1846-1878) and second longest serving Pope to date (see note on St. Peter.)

19 April 2005 to present Pope Benedict XVI Papa Benedictus Sextus Decimus, Episcopus Romanus Joseph Alois Ratzinger, Markt am Inn, Bavaria, Germany. First German pope since Pope Adrian VI in 1523. (Although Adrian VI was born in the Holy Roman Empire, it is in what is now Dutch territory, so some do not include him and claim that the previous German pope was Pope Stephen X.) Oldest to become pope since Clement XII in 1730. First modern Pope from a predominantly non-Catholic country.

Appendix 2 - Time line – early period

- 1453 King Louis XI forms Cent Suisse in France
- 1497 Pope Sixtus IV makes an alliance with the Confederates (Swiss)
- 1506 January 22 Pope Julius II forms the Swiss Guard
- 1527 May 6 Sack of Rome – 147 Swiss died 42 survived Landsknecht (German) Guard formed
- 1542 Reforming of the Guard with men of Lucerne
- 1542 Legation Swiss Guards sent to Bologna and Ravenna
- 1570 October 7 Battle of Lepanto – contingent of Swiss with Papal fleet under Marcantonio Collona.
- 1732 Building of New Quarters
- 1797 Pope Pius VI carried off to exile in France – Guard disappears
- 1800 Swiss Guard reestablished by Pius VII
- 1809 Swiss Guard disbanded – Napoleon establishes the Kingdom of Italy
- 1814 Swiss Guard reestablished
- 1840
- 1860 to 1870 End of the Papal States
- 1914 Introduction of current Swiss Guard uniforms
- 1929 Lateran Treaty regularizes the relations between Italy and the Vatican

Illustrations

(rX refer to the references – see page 419)

- Papal Swiss Guard – from the Schweizergarde web site
- Swiss Guard recruits swearing on the Guards' standard – from the Schweizergarde web site
- Julius Banner – Muhleman (r17)
- Wood cut of the Swiss of Pope Julius II showing Julius banners of the Confederate Cantons and the Church and Gonfaloniere banners.
- Early Swiss confederates and their banners – Schilling Chronicle (r17)
- Cent Suisse with flag –seventeen hundreds from Bory (r7)
- Contrasting colors of Swiss Papal uniforms Swiss National Museum authors photograph
- The variety of current Papal Guard uniforms – from a miniatures painting guide by J.P. Feigly of Paris France
- Livery lace of the late eighteen hundreds – Swiss National Museum collection author's photograph
- Some papal arms – from left to right – Julius II, Medici (Leo X and Clement VII), Adrian VI, Paul III (Farnese)
- A Swiss of the late seventeen hundreds in red and blue and yellow – Swiss National Museum
- A Swiss of the late seventeen hundreds in red, white and yellow – Swiss National Museum
- The Pope's elephant and Swiss Guard from a Maiolica plate at the Victoria and Albert Museum London from Bedini (r5)
- An officer's uniform – Schweizergarde web site
- Fresco by Guiseppe Porta showing Swiss Guards and flag, Walpen (r23)
- Fresco by ? showing Swiss Guards in the Farnese colors

- Fresco showing later guards in a processional painting of the early sixteen hundreds (r23)
- The variety of headgear – from Krieg (r15)
- Papal Guard Uniform – 1802 – Knotel Uniformkunde web site
- Swiss Guard Uniform – 1840s Schweizergarde web site
- Swiss Guard Uniform – 1890s Museum Chateau Morges – authors photograph

Acknowledgements:

Many thanks to the Swiss National Museum in Zurich and in particular to Juerg Bulet the curator of uniforms and flags for a wonderful day in their archives.

Also a salute and thanks to the museums of Switzerland in particular that at Chateau Morges in the Vaud near Lausanne and the former Museum of Swiss in Foreign Service at Chateau Penthes in Geneva now called the Museum of the History of Swiss in the Worlds.

Thanks also to Dr. Emil Dreyer for opening his wonderful archives to me.

Thanks also to Major Peter Hasler, the archivist of the Pontifical Swiss Guard, for his early encouragement by letter and email and his direction to key references.

To all the authors who wrote the books I have cited thanks for all their work that made mine so much easier.

And finally thanks to Dr. Whitney Smith for all things vexillological and the word.

About the author



Arthur Etchells is a semi-retired chemical engineer who has had a life time interest in world and in particular military history. All his life he lived in Philadelphia, USA. He is particularly interested in uniforms, flags and heraldry of the countries of the world. He attended several NAVA and world vexillological conferences and presented talks and papers at them. His job and retired life allow him to visit many countries and their museums and libraries. He also collects books on the above mentioned topics and miniature figures. He enjoys corresponding with anyone on the subject military flags.

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