

Emil Dreyer: Flags of the Pope's Swiss Guard since 1798

Abstract: *A chronological history of the flags of the Pope's Swiss Guard since the establishment of the Roman Republic in 1798 until today is presented and richly illustrated. Up to the first half of the 19th century only colour drawings can be used as a pictorial testimony of the guard's flags, since no original flag from before that time is known to have survived. The flags used to be striped in the Medici livery colours blue, red and yellow and had the Pope's and the commander's arms painted on them. When a Pope or commander changed, the new arms were painted covering the old ones, so the flag fabric was rarely made new.*

A new flag design by Robert Durrer with a white cross throughout was accepted in 1913 and blessed by Pope Pius X on 5 May 1914. Changes of a Pope and/or commander were now reflected on the flag by cutting out the old personal emblems and replacing them by the new ones, the basic design remaining unchanged, but in the course of the 20th century flags were made completely new more often. Original flag photographs document the history of the guard's flags since the middle of the 19th century until present times with the flag under Pope Benedict XVI and commander Elmar Mäder.

In a second part of this work the various flags of the veteran's association of the Pope's Swiss Guard, founded in 1921, are presented.

Pius VI (1775-1799)

We don't know how the flag of the guard looked like at the end of the 18th century, but we have learnt from Dr. Etchells' presentation ^[1] that already at the end of the 16th century and then again during the 18th century the flag used to show the Medici colours blue, yellow and red in a striped pattern, with the Pope's coat-of arms in a prominent position and the arms of the commander in a subordinate position.



PIUS VI
1775-1799

From a manuscript in the State archives in Rome, dated 1775, we know, that the general treasurer Cardinal Pallotta had authorized a payment for a new flag of the Swiss Guard made of the colours blue, red and yellow, and that the Guard was to have a new flag made every 3 years ^[2].

At the turning of the 18th to the 19th century

French armies had spread the revolutionary ideals to Europe. In February 1798 general Berthier started occupation of the Papal States, he entered Rome on 10 February, and on 15 February 1798 the Roman Republic was established. The same day Pope Pius VI was deposed and his Swiss Guard was disarmed. The Pope was forced into exile in France 5 days later, accompanied by the Swiss Guard commander Franz Ludwig Pfyffer von Heidegg, from Lucerne, who was in command since 1783, and a couple of men from his Swiss Guard. This commander was not a Pfyffer of the “von Altshofen” family branch, as most publications erroneously tell, but a Pfyffer of the “von Heidegg” branch [3].

Pfyffer reported on 24 February 1798 to his government, and the Lucerne government recommended Pfyffer a month later to secure the guard’s archives and to dismiss all the men from the guard [4]. Shortly after Pfyffer too was dismissed and he returned home.

The Roman Republic chose as colours for its armed forces a tricolour of black, white and red, and as emblem the eagle from ancient Rome, as can be seen on the reverse side of the flag of the first battalion of the national guard of Rome. This military flag of the Roman Republic is published here for the first time, thanks to the kind permission of the Musée de l’Armée in Paris, where the flag is kept in a storage room. Eminent Italian vexillologists like Enrico Ghisi [5] or Aldo Ziggio [6] had no knowledge of this flag and therefore had assumed in their respective master publications that no flags of the Roman Republic



existed anymore. The obverse side of the national guard colour shows the fasces with the liberty cap.

Pius VII (1800-1823)

In November 1799 Neapolitan troops chased away the French from Rome and the Roman Republic ceased to exist. Pope Pius VI had died on 29 August 1799 in exile and the conclave of Venice chose a new Pope only on 14 March 1800. So at the turning of the 18th to 19th century there was no Pope, no commander, no Swiss Guard, and hence no guard flag.

The new Pope, Pius VII, arrived in Rome in July 1800. Shortly after, under the command of Karl Leodegar Pfyffer von Altshofen, the guard was again established with 41 men, who had remained in Rome after abolishment of the guard. We do not know what had happened to



the old guard flag from before 1798, nor do we know, whether that flag was taken up again, or, in case of loss of the old flag, a new one had to be made. If the old colour was used again, then the coat-of-arms of the Pope had to be painted new and the arms of the old commander would have needed a slight modification to show the Pfyffer von Altshofen arms.

During the 19th century the Guard flag was rarely made new, changes in coat-of arms of Popes or commanders were effected by painting the new emblems upon the old ones, or by scrubbing away the old ones before painting new ones at their place. This explains why there are almost no flags from those difficult periods preserved.

On 2 February 1808 Rome was again occupied by the French and the Swiss Guard was ordered by the Pope, who had taken refuge in the Quirinal Palace, to deposit their arms. The French pressed most of the pontifical militia into their own troops. Whilst these militia, now within the French army, kept their old red and yellow cockades, the Pope had distributed on 13 March 1808 white and yellow cockades to those few



men who had stayed with him, that is the Noble Guard and the Swiss Guard. The new colours had a good acceptance and on 16 March the change of the Papal cockade was officially announced [7] and its use extended to those few other Papal troops, who had not yet disbanded or joined the French. The bill of 16 March 1808 marks the beginning of the colours yellow and white, which we see on the Vatican flag today. Napoleon officially incorporated the Pontifical State into his empire on 7 May 1809. The Pope answered by excommunicating the Emperor on 10 June. Napoleon, furious, then decided to have the Pope arrested and sent into exile to Fontainebleau, what finally was done during the night of 6 July 1809 [8]. The Swiss Guard, which had orders from the Pope not to fight, was disbanded on 7 July 1809.

After the abdication of Napoleon on 4 April 1814, the Pope returned to Rome on 24 May and Karl Leodegar Pfyffer von Altshofen immediately began with reconstitution of the Swiss Guard. Contemporary reports tell that on 22 August 1814 the Swiss Guard was on duty again [9]. Probably the flag of 1800 came into use again, otherwise a new one had to be made showing the same emblems as in 1800.

The Napoleonic wars had a disastrous impact in continental economy and meant a severe blow to the textile industry. Fabrics became very expensive and silk brocade was rare. Presumably at this stage the practice to have a new flag made every 3 years was abandoned.

Leo XII (1823-1829)



A new Pope was elected on 28 September 1823 [10], Leo XII, who kept Karl Leodegar Pfyffer as commander of his Swiss Guard. It is almost certain, that the Pope's arms on the Swiss Guard flag were altered accordingly. Captain

Roman Fringeli has an important collection of old prints regarding the Swiss Guard [11] and he



has given me his kind permission to use some images from his collection in this paper. Among them is a coloured lithograph from about 1825 showing a Swiss Guard standard bearer holding a red, yellow and blue flag in what seem to be 9 stripes. The colour sequence of the stripes is not regular, the tiara from the Pope's coat-of-arms is not placed in a perpendicular way to the stripes and unhappily enough only the tiara from the Pope's coat-of-arms is visible. This print is all but a reliable flag source, but it nonetheless gives some important hints to the flag.

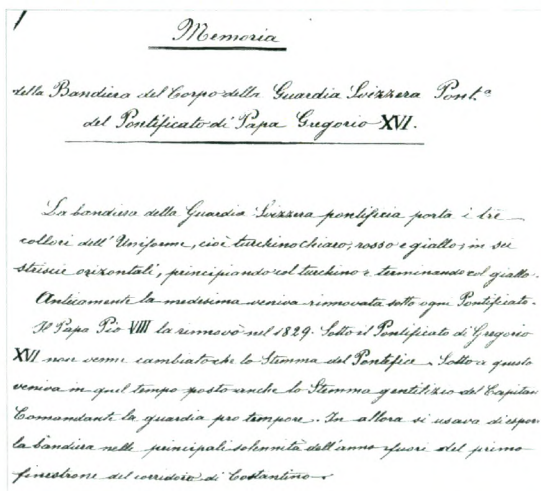
Pius VIII (1829-1830)

Leo XII died on 10 February 1829, and Karl Leodegar Pfyffer continued to serve as commander of the guard with the new Pope, Pius VIII, elected on 31 March of the same year. The flag then was made completely new, showing the new Pope's coat-of-arms, while the old Pfyffer arms remained unchanged. The hand-written comments to some water-colours depicting guard flags in the Swiss Guard archives ^[12], dating from the end of the 19th century, reveal that “in 1829 Pope Pius VIII renewed the flag”. These manuscripts tell us as well, that “since Pope Gregory XVI only the Pope's



PIO VIII
1829-1830

emblems used to change as well as those of the commanders”, the flag itself was not made new at such occasions.



Gregory XVI (1831-1846)

Pius VIII died on 1st December 1830 and on 2 February 1831 Bartolomeo Alberto Cappellari, from Venice, was elected as Pope Gregory XVI. Another coloured lithograph from the Fringeli collection, dated about 1840, shows a detailed image of the reverse side of the Swiss Guard flag [13]. The Papal coat-of-arms is placed in the upper part of the 9 Medici stripes, while the coat-of-



GREGORIO XVI
1831-1846



KARLEDEGAR PFFYFFER

arms of the commander is to be seen in the lower part of the flag. These arms correspond in this case to Martin Pfyffer von Altishofen, son of Karl Leodegar, who had taken over command on 15 January 1835, after his father's death on 9 November 1834. Both Karl Leodegar and Martin bear the same coat-of-arms [14].

The lithograph, though quite accurate, erroneously shows a colour sequence of the stripes in blue, yellow and red,



instead of the

correct blue, red and yellow.

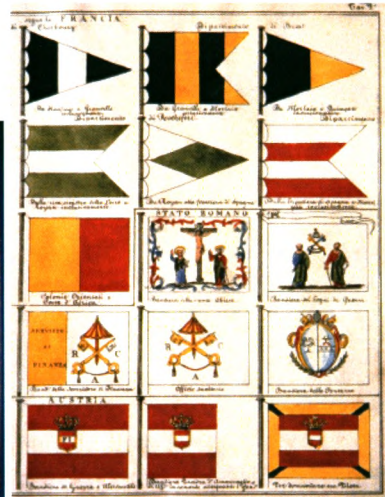
The commander's coat-of-arms should have the Pfyffer quarters in yellow instead of blue.

Another print from the Fringeli collection, also dated around 1840, but less detailed, depicts a standard-bearer with a flag of what seem to be 7 stripes of

blue, red and yellow and with the arms of Pope Gregory XVI. Here the sequence of colours is correct. The same order of colours, blue, red and yellow, can be seen on this watercolour, made in the late 19th century and kept at the Swiss Guard archives, though it seems that the coat-of-arms has been copied from the earlier, detailed print. As we will see further on photographs of original flags, the stripes were always arranged in the colour sequence blue, red and yellow. As has been demonstrated, even rich details of a print or drawing do not guarantee reliability.

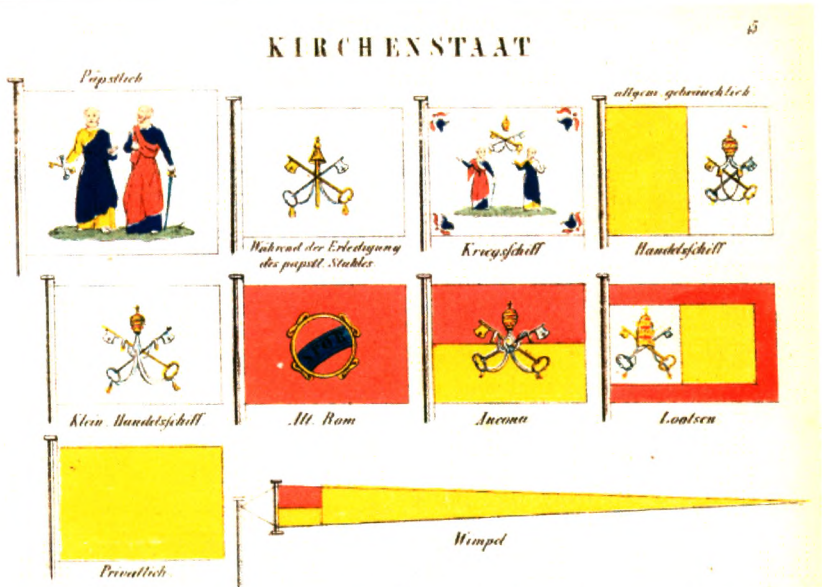
The Papal flag law of 17 September 1825 had introduced a series of new flags ^[15] for the Papal States' commercial navy, fishing fleet and revenue service ^[16], which for the first time combined yellow and white areas on Papal flags. These flags can be seen on a flag plate from the official Neapolitan navy flag book ^[17], issued in 1834. The flag plate also shows a white fort flag with the

coat-of-arms of Pope Gregory XVI and the ensign of the Pope's navy, white with Saints Peter and



Paul. The war ensign did not include the new yellow and white colours but remained as it had been before. Another print in the Fringeli collection dating from the first half of the 19th century shows this Papal war ensign.

The German flag album of Depperman and Ruschke ^[18], dating probably from 1844, also shows maritime flags of the Pontifical State. A yellow and white flag with the keys is labelled as being the merchant ensign commonly used.



The Flag Bulletin has published in 2003 a thorough research by reverend William M. Becker ^[19] on the flags of the Papal States from 1800 to 1870, and in 2005, Francia Vexilla too has published an extensive article by Cédric de Fougerolle ^[20] on the flags of the Pope and the Pontifical State.

Pius IX (1846-1878)

Gregory XVI died on 1st June 1846 and 15 days later Pope Pius IX was elected. The coat of arms of this Pope were then painted on the Swiss Guard flag,



at a cost of 7,50 scudi. This flag is preserved in the Swiss Guard commander's office and still has 7 and a half stripes of blue, red and yellow of what originally were 9 equal stripes. The oval coat-of-arms of the Pope is placed in the upper



half of the obverse side of the flag, whereas we can assume that the round coat-of-arms of the commander - Martin Pfyffer remained in service under the new Pope - was placed in the lower half of the flag. While the actual flag does no longer show any commander's arms, traces of such an emblem can clearly be recognised on the flag and we know that such an arrangement was usual at the time (see Ill. 12). I have been unable to obtain a picture of the reverse side of this flag, but I found no indication whatsoever that both sides of the flag were different.

This flag is also depicted in a print dating from about the mid 19th century and which is on exhibition behind glass at the military museum in Morges. The number of stripes and the colouring of the stripes do not correspond to the real flag. The similarity between the various prints mentioned is evident and suggests that there must have been an original black and white print, which was used again and again, different artists filling in colours and coats-of-arms as time went by.

Martin Pfyffer resigned on 30 July 1847 and his arms were removed from the flag, that is, the oil colour was cleaned off the silk.

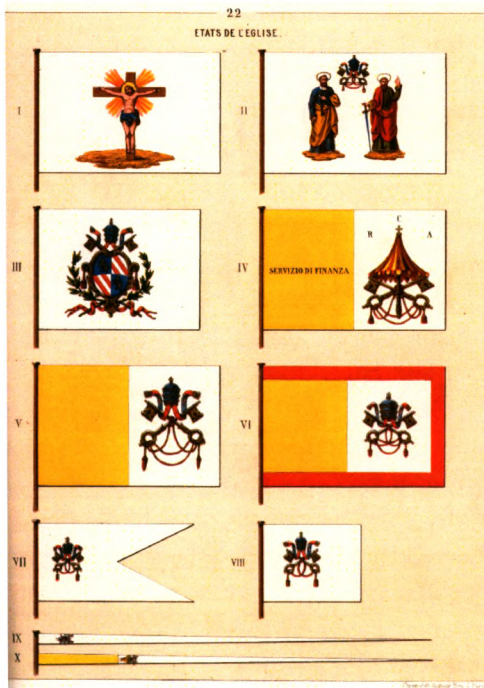


On 3 September of that year Franz Xaver Leopold Meyer von Schauensee, from Lucerne, who was a captain in the second foreign regiment of the pontifical army, became the provisional commander of the Swiss Guard. Von Schauensee's command was officially endorsed by the Pope only one year later, on 3 September 1848. The coat-of-arms of Meyer von Schauensee must have been painted where those of Martin Pfyffer had been at some stage between September 1847 and September 1848, most probably in September 1848.



Those years were again very difficult for the Pope and his absolutist temporal government, which was contested by democratic forces. Revolution had broke out in November 1848 and the Pope had forbidden his Swiss Guard to fire back. On 16 November von Schauensee was captured by insurrectionists and set free a few hours later. The Pope was put under house arrest, but managed to escape on 24 November to Gaeta, a town under Neapolitan rule. The Swiss Guard was disarmed.

On 9 February 1849 the Roman Republic was established and on 12 February the Italian tricolour was officially declared the republic's flag



being raised again over Sant Angelo castle ^[22]. Pope Gregory XVI. returned to Rome only on 12 April 1850 ^[23].

Plate 22 from the famous Le Gras flag album of 1858 accurately shows the Pope's flag, which waved on top of Sant Angelo castle, as well as the maritime flags of the Papal States ^[24].

During his one and a half year of exile in Gaeta Pope Pius IX consecrated a new flag ^[25] to the few men of his Swiss Guard who had joined him. Most probably the old flag had remained in Rome. The damaged Gaeta flag is kept in a glass show case at the entrance to the guard's armoury. It has a reduced size, of barely 1 meter square, and shows three



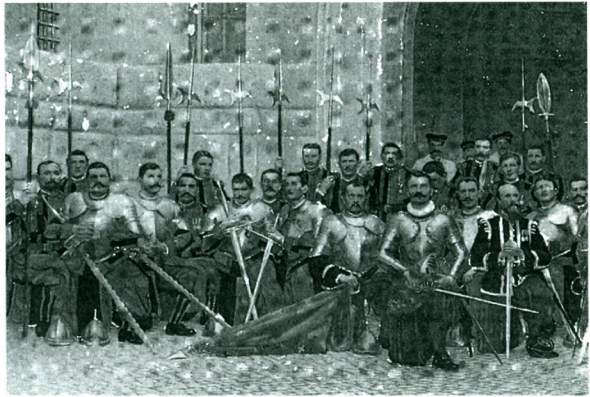
horizontal stripes of dark blue, red and golden yellow. The obverse has the Papal coat-of-arms in the middle of the red stripe, with the golden inscription "GUARDIA SVIZZERA PONTIFICA" above the tiara. Two golden crossed keys are painted on the reverse red stripe. The blue stripe bears on both sides next to the hoist a golden wreath and on its fly end the Swiss national arms within the circular inscription "SCHWEIZERISCHE EIDGENOSSENSCHAFT." The wreath at the hoist shows an empty space, almost certainly designed to contain the commander's coat-of-arms.

This allows the assumption, that the flag must have been made shortly after the Pope's escape from Rome, when there maybe was uncertainty about the fate of the commander. May be it was made a bit later, when Meyer von Schauenburg, who had managed to join the Pope, left Gaeta on the Pope's orders to organise resistance.

The flag preserved has the Swiss cross with the arms somewhat longer than they are broad, very much like the cross type introduced in Switzerland officially in 1889 (where cross arms are one sixth longer than broad). This anachronism can only be explained by assuming that the Swiss cross



must have been altered in 1889 or later. An undated postcard [26] depicting a 19th century print has two Swiss guards holding the Gaeta standard, and the square Swiss cross type on the upper blue stripe is clearly visible.



üblich der Vierhundertjahrfeier der Schweizergarde, 1906.

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Photo souvenir à l'occasion du
quatrième centenaire de la Garde suisse en 1906.

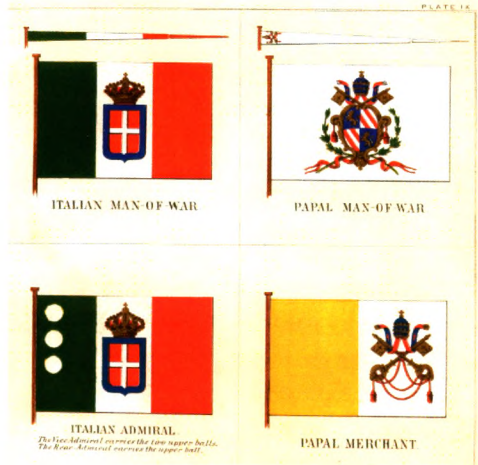
From April 1850 onwards (the Pope was back in Rome) the reconstituted Swiss Guard laid down the Gaeta flag, which was considered a less important banner for a temporary small guard contingent. They started using again the old, big flag with nine stripes of blue, red and yellow. Nonetheless the Gaeta standard seems to have been taken occasionally out of the armoury, where it is still kept today. The flag is to be seen on a souvenir black and white photograph taken during the 400 year celebrations in 1906 [27] and where a 1889 shape cross can be appreciated.



Meyer von Schauensee died in March 1860 and on 20 September 1860 baron Alfred Gaston von Sonnenberg, from Lucerne, was appointed as the new commander. Meyer's arms then must have been removed and Sonnenberg's coat-of-arms painted at their place, the Pope's emblem remaining unchanged, of course. Apart the changing coats-of-arms of commanders and three different Pope's arms, the original Swiss Guard flag with nine stripes of blue, red and yellow made in 1829 seems to have been in use until 1878 [28]. A manuscript in the Swiss Guard archive tells us, that already in 1847 "*the flag was in bad shape and the colours very faded, the reason for this being mostly due to the changing of the captain's coat-of-arms*" [29].

The Papal State was in turmoil since the uprising of 1848, the Kingdom of Italy had been proclaimed on 18 March 1861, and the Italian unification movement under Garibaldi, backed by the Italian army, was gaining power and territory each day. The Pope's flags were disappearing, while Italian flags were closing in at Rome. The U.S. Navy flag book of 1870 shows the Italian and Papal flags side by side on the same plate ³⁰.

Only French troops prevented the Papal State's collapse. The French-Prussian war then led to a withdrawal of French troops from the Pontifical State and after Napoleon's defeat at Sedan Italian troops occupied Rome on 20 September 1870. This was the end of temporal rule of the Pope, who from then on lived isolated in his Vatican area.



Leo XIII (1878-1903)

After Pius IX had died on 7 February 1878, Pope Leo XIII was elected on 20 February of



the same year. A new flag with nine stripes was made with the

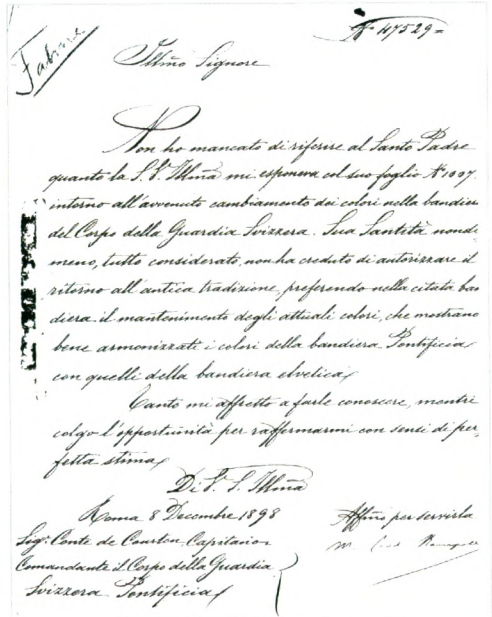


new Pope's coat-of-arms placed upon the three central stripes. This flag had white stripes instead of blue ones. The old flag was very used by the time and the blue

colour had faded so much, that it looked white. So the flag was made erroneously with white, red and yellow stripes. The flag preserved in the Swiss Guard quarters does not show any commander's emblem, nor is the Pope's emblem placed in a way to leave enough space for a commander's coat-of-arms, if we assume that these were not very tiny.



Sonnenberg quitted his duty on 20 September 1878 and Count Louis-Martin de Courten, from the Valais, was appointed his successor the same day. 20 years later the error of the white stripe had been noticed and de Courten asked the Pope to have a new flag made, which could restore the traditional blue colour. Pope Leo XIII answered through a letter of Cardinal Rampolla dated 8 December 1898, that the colours white, red and yellow showed a good harmony of the colours of



the Swiss and the Pontifical flags, and hence did not want to return to the traditional colours [31].

De Courten resigned on 1st June 1901, and the command was handed over the same day to Leopold Meyer von Schauensee, who had entered service with the guard as a youth, when his father, Franz Xaver, had been commander.

Pius X (1903-1914)

Leo XIII died on 20 July 1903 and on 4 August Pope Pius X was elected. A new guard flag was made on this occasion, with nine stripes of blue, red and yellow, with the new Pope's arms and with the coat-of-arms of captain Leopold Meyer von Schauensee. The flag is preserved in the Swiss Guard chancellery office in Vatican City.

Meyer von Schauensee died on 15 October 1910 [32].



arms until 1913. In September of that year, the guard flag was only 10 years old - colonel Repond entrusted Dr. Robert Durrer, who was the state archivist in Stans, with designing a completely new guard flag. Durrer's original proposal, which was painted in real size on a cardboard by Xaver Stöckli, and which is still kept in the Guard archives in Rome, was approved by the Pope on 1st November 1913.



The command

was assigned to Jules Repond, a lawyer and colonel from Fribourg, on 24 November. Three weeks later he arrived in Rome. It seems that the guard flag underwent no change of commander's





The square flag measures 2,25m and features as the main emblem the old Swiss cross, white on a red background. The first red quarter has the current Pope's arms (Pius X), while the fourth red quarter has the arms of Pope Julius II (1503-1513), founder of the guard, and who was a *della Rovere*, hence the canting arms with the oak tree. Pope Julius II had his coat-of-arms stitched on the richly embroidered corner of the banner he gave to the canton of Zurich in 1512, when as a reward for the help of the Confederates he had precious state banners distributed to them ¹³³. Quarters 3 and 4 are a reverence to the old guard flag and show varying stripes in the well-known Medici colours. The commander's coat-of-arms are set in the center of the cross on a purple red background within a green laurel wreath, which reaches a bit into the quarters.

The flag was made by the sisters of the Maria Rickenbach monastery in Schwyz by sewing the different pieces of the so-called Julius damask, which has a typical pomegranate pattern, together ¹³⁴. This technique allows for the easy



exchange of coats-of-arms when these are needed.

The Pope blessed the colour on 5 May 1914 and the following day 41 recruits swore their oath on the flag ^[35]. The flag was published in 1914 as a black and white photograph in the Swiss heraldic review ^[36].

Benedict XV (1914-1922)

Shortly after the outbreak of World War I Pope Pius X died on 20 August 1914 and on 3 September



Giacomo della Chiesa was elected Pope Benedict XV.

The dead Pope's arms were removed from the first quarter of the flag and the canting arms of the new Pope were inserted. Colonel Repond resigned from duty on

1st July 1921 and immediately Alois Hirschbühl, his deputy, became the new commander. The flag was changed accordingly, Repond's arms

were replaced by those of Hirschbühl.



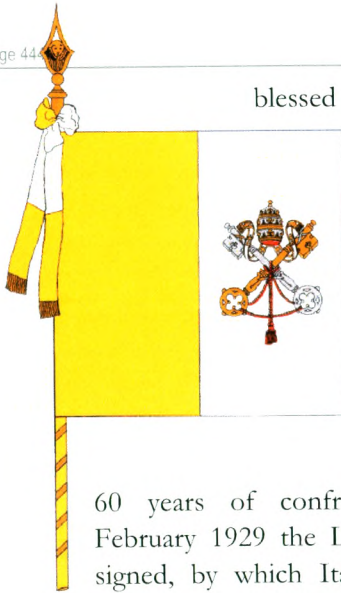
Pius XI (1922-1939)

Upon the death of Pope Benedict XV on 22 January 1921, the conclave elected cardinal Achille Ratti on 6 February 1922 as Pope Pius XI. Again,

the guard flag was modified by taking out the

arms of Benedict XV and sewing on the new Pope's arms. At the end of 1932 a new flag was made by the sisters of the Franciscan Mission in Rome. This new flag was identical with the preceding one and was





blessed on 1st January 1933 [37]. The old flag, originally made in late 1913, but now showing the arms of Pope Pius XI and those of colonel Hirschbühl, was laid down. Today it hangs with fading colours in the hallway of the guard's command barrack.

Pius XI normalised the relationship with the Italian government, ending almost

60 years of confrontation. On 11 February 1929 the Lateran Treaty was signed, by which Italy recognised the sovereignty of the Pope within the

Vatican City as an independent state, and the Pope in turn recognised the Kingdom of Italy.

Article 19 of the fundamental law of the Vatican City [38], which was published on 8 June 1929, deals with the yellow and white flag of the new state.

Hirschbühl resigned on 30 June 1935 and on 1st July Georg von Sury d'Aspremont was appointed new commander.



Pius XII (1939-1958)

A further change in the flag happened, when a month after the death of Pope Pius XI on 2 February 1939, Pope Pius XII was elected on 2 March. The Swiss guard flag now bore the coat-of-arms of Pope Pius XII and within the central wreath the von Sury d'Aspremont arms.

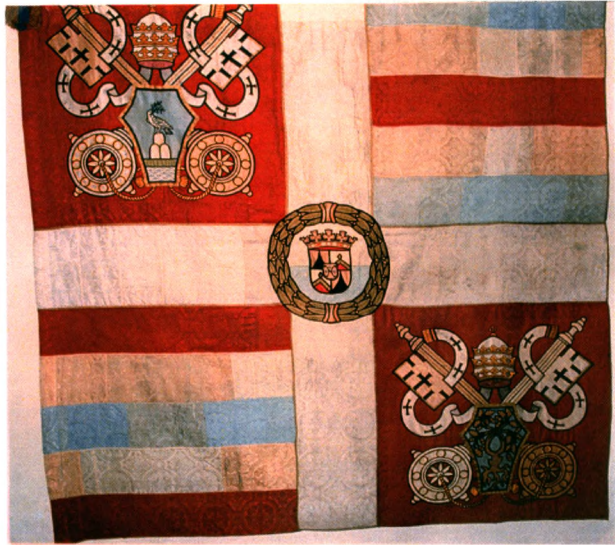
When von Sury resigned on 31 March 1942, Heinrich Pfyffer von Altshofen was named commander the very next day. Yet another flag change was carried out, the Pfyffer coat-of-arms replaced that of von Sury. This flag was replaced in 1956, when colonel Pfyffer had a new flag made with identical emblems and gave it to his men as a gift for the 450 year



PIUS XII

celebrations of the guard. This new flag had been made by the flag factory Fraefel & Co. in Saint Gall.

The flag of 1933-1956 is kept in the office of major Peter Hasler, ordnance officer of the Swiss Guard,



who has kindly furnished an important amount of information needed for the present research. The flag is the first one to have the family arms of the commander set against a background of the cantonal colours, white and blue for Lucerne in this case. The new 1956 flag was blessed and kissed by the Pope on 6 May 1956 before the swearing in of new recruits [39].



Heinrich Pfyffer died of a heart attack during duty on 12 March 1957, and Robert Nünlist was appointed commander on 16 April of that year. On 6 May 1958 the recruits swore in with a hand on the guard flag, which had been altered to include the new commander's arms.



John XXIII (1958-1963)

One and a half years later, Pope Pius XII died on 9 October 1958. On 28 October Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was elected Pope John XXIII, whose coat-of-arms ^[40] was designed by the famous ecclesiastical heraldist archbishop Bruno Bernard Heim (1911-2003) ^[41]. The Swiss Guard flag was altered accordingly, as shown on the 1959 regulations ^[42] of the Swiss Guard.

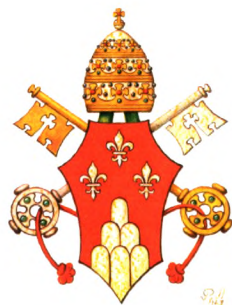




Paul VI (1963-1978)

John XXIII died on 3 June 1963 and Pope Paul VI was elected on 21 of that month. Then the arms of the past Pope were cut out of the Swiss Guard flag and the new Pope's arms, again designed by archbishop Heim, were sewn into the empty space.

A new flag was blessed on 3 December 1967 in the presence of colonel Robert Nünlist [43]. It had been made by the flag factory Heimgartner in Wil, though the old flag had been in service only 11 years and still was in a good shape. The old flag was laid down and today is exposed in the theatre vestibule of the guard's quarters.



Pope Paul VI decided on 14 September 1970 to abolish all existing Vatican security forces except the Swiss Guard [44]. So the Noble Guard, established in 1808, the Palatine Guard, established in 1858, and the

Pontifical Gendarmeria, founded in 1810, were disbanded or melted into other forces. The colours of the Noble Guard, of the Palatine Guard and of the Gendarmeria were laid down in museums.



Since now the Swiss Guard was the only armed force of the state, they had the duty to escort the Vatican state flag on official ceremonies.

Robert Nünlist resigned on 31 October 1972 and the following day the Pope commissioned Franz Pfyffer von Altshofen as new commander of the Swiss Guard. A colour plate in the Swiss Guard regulations issued on 28 June 1976 shows the flag in use during Pfyffer's command.



John Paul I (1978-1978)

Pope Paul VI died in 1978 and the conclave elected Pope John Paul I, whose coat-of-arms was designed by archbishop Heim too. The Pope died but one month later and there had been no time for changes in the guard flag.



John Paul II (1978-2005)

Karol-Jozef Wojtyla, the cardinal from Cracow, was elected Pope John Paul II on 16 October 1978 and adopted the coat-of-arms designed for him by archbishop Heim ^[45] [46].



Franz Pfyffer resigned on 24 November 1982 and at the same time Roland Buchs from Fribourg was appointed commander.

Now a new flag was made at the Heimgartner flag factory and the Pfyffer flag was stored in the theatre hall. The reverse side of the flag shows

the same emblems mirror-inverted, as is the case in all guard flags since 1914 at least. Strangely enough, this flag has the traditional Pfyffer arms on a background of white and red, instead of Lucerne's white and blue.



The new commander Buchs had his arms put on the new flag, on a background of black and white, the Fribourg colours, while the emblem of Pope John Paul II remained unchanged in the upper quarter..

Upon retirement and after a new flag had been given to the guard, Roland Buchs took the guard flag used during his command period with him, so nowadays the flag is at his home.



Buchs resigned from his post on 30 November 1997, but it took half a year, until 4 May 1998, to choose Alois Estermann as a new



commander. Only 10 hours after appointment he and his wife were shot by an enraged guard, who after the murders shot himself on the spot. After this tragedy Roland Buchs had to take up command ad interim again, until he was succeeded on 1st August 1998 by Pius Segmüller, from Saint Gall.

The new guard flag, made by the Heimgartner flag factory, was inaugurated in Rome on 25 September 1998 and blessed by the Saint Gall bishop Ivo Fürer.

Colonel Pius Segmüller resigned on 31 October 2002 and his deputy Elmar Mäder was appointed new commander on 11 November.

His coat-of-arms was painted by the ex-guards Gérard Tomasetti and Hans Gehrig on their guard commanders' armorial [47]. The guard flag was altered to include Mäder's coat-of-arms on a background of green and white, the Saint Gall colours, as can be seen on a



Flags of the pope's Swiss Guard since 1798

Emil Dreyer, CH

photograph of Stefan Meier published in the book by Robert Walpen [48]. The wreath is not as elaborate in design as on earlier flags.





Benedict XVI (2005-)

Upon the death of Pope John Paul II on 2 April 2005 the conclave chose cardinal Josef Alois Ratzinger as new Pope Benedict XVI on 19 April 2005 [49]. Pope Benedict XVI



preferred, for the first time in papal heraldry, a mitra instead of the tiara to crown his arms, and for the first time as well, a pallium appears below a Pope's coat-of-arms [50] [51].

The flag was altered to show the new Pope's arms in the canton. The flag was first publicly presented during the swearing in of new recruits on 6 May 2005. The same day, after the ceremony, colonel Mäder presented the new flag to the Pope. Plate I of the 2006 edition of the official Swiss Guard regulations shows the actual guard flag.

Appendice A
(Articolo 3)

BANDIERA



Tav. 1



The flags of the Pontifical Swiss Guard Veteran's Association (PSGVA)

After WW I Philippe Rigolet, a veteran Swiss guard from Fribourg, ran a hotel in Gruyères, where other veterans used to stay on holidays. Most of them were from the Fribourg canton. In 1920 they formed the Fribourg veteran's association and then contacted other veterans throughout Switzerland to establish a central, national organisation. The founding assembly of the Pontifical Swiss Guard Veteran's Association (PSGVA) took place in Lucerne on 21 June 1921 ^[52]. Today the association has more than 800 members in 13 different sections.

On 5 October 1946 the PSGVA adopted its first main flag, and a new flag was blessed on 6 September 1987 in Berne ^[53]. The second main flag was designed and manufactured by the Heimgartner flag factory. Archbishop Heim acted as a heraldic consultant to this flag design. During the 700 year celebrations of the Swiss Confederation in 1991 the PSGVA marched with its main flag in a huge parade in Stans.



The main flag is present at all important gatherings of the PSGVA, like the general assembly of 24 September 2005 in Lucerne. On 4 May 2006 the flag arrived in Rome with a group of veterans to commemorate the founding of the Pontifical Swiss Guard in 1506.



The flag has a red schwenkel with white characters telling on the obverse "Vereinigung ehemaliger päpstlicher Schweizergardisten 1921" and on the reverse "Association des anciens Gardes suisses pontificaux 1921". A red streamer with white characters bears the same designation in Italian language on the obverse and in Romanic language on the reverse side.



This could be clearly recognized when in Rome the main flag was greeted by the flag of the Pope's Swiss Guard. There are table flags of the main flag as well.

Fribourg section

The Fribourg section adopted its first flag on 29 September 1957. The flag had been made by the Heimgartner factory for the film producer



Praesens Film in Zurich, which used it as a requisite in the black and white movie on the Pontifical Swiss Guard "Zwischen uns die Berge". The Fribourg section was able to buy twelve helmets from the film producer and got the flag as well as a

present [54]. The flag is made of a thin synthetic silk. It has the wrong coat-of-arms of Pope Pius XII, yellow instead of blue, and colonel Pfyffer's

wreath lacks the canton's colours background. Maybe these errors were made on purpose to be able to distinguish the emblems on a black and white movie.

In 1994 a flag committee of the Fribourg section selected a new flag, designed by Alexandre Chassot. The flag was adopted in the same year and shows as a main feature a Swiss Guard standing before the current



Fribourg city emblem, which shows the cathedral and the Tornalettes building. The streamer, which can be attached below the finial, has on one side the German text "EHEMALIGE PÄPSTLICHE SCHWEIZERGARDISTEN FREIBURG" and on the other side the French text "ANCIENS GARDES SUISSES PONTIFICAUX FRIBOURG". Both flags of the Fribourg section are kept in a glass show case in the monastery of the Ursulines in Fribourg.



An identical flag to the old Fribourg section flag had been up to last year on display in the Pontifical Swiss Guard's room at the "Museum of the Swiss in the World" in Penthes, near Geneva. It is obvious that this flag must have been made along with the flag which is preserved in Fribourg. Since the Penthes flag is not a real Guard flag it has been removed from exhibition in May of this year.



Ostschweiz section

On 3 April 1960 the section "Oberrhein" was established [55], with members from the Grisons (subsection "Rätia") and the eastern part of Switzerland (subsection "Gallus"). On 21 May 1978 the section name was changed into „Ostschweiz“, to reflect the growing membership with members from Glarus, Appenzell and Schaffhausen.



On 30 April 1972 a section flag was adopted, following a design of Alexander Good, which he had presented in January 1972. On 10 September 2006 a new flag with identical design was blessed in Gossau.

As a part of the ceremony the main flag rendered a salute to the new section flag and then all the other section flags, which had been invited to the blessing, danced to welcome the new flag.



After the ceremony the new and the old section flags marched behind the main flag through Gossau, followed by the flags of other sections. The obverse of the streamer has a German text, while the text on its reverse is written in Italian and Romanic languages.

The flag, made by the Heimgartner flag factory, follows the pattern of the Pontifical Swiss Guard flag, but shows no coat-of-arms. Instead, the motto "FIDES ET VIRTUS" in white characters was set into the red upper quarter near the hoist.

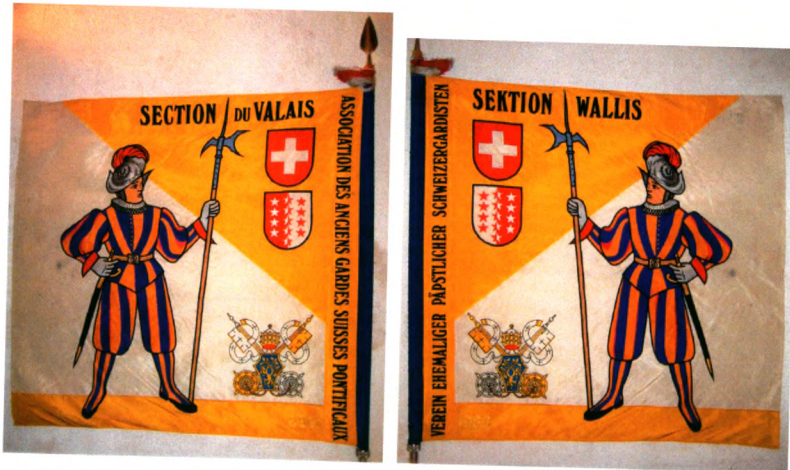


Valais section

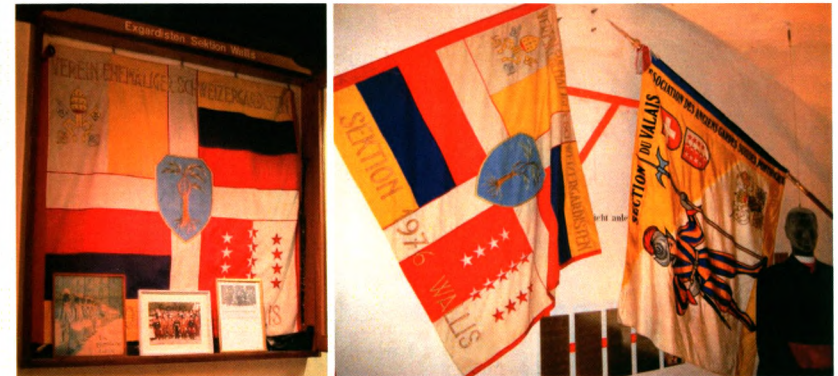


The third section to adopt a flag of its own was the Valais section, which had been established in 1928. In 1976 Walter Henzen designed the first flag, which was made by the nuns of a monastery in Domodossola (Italy), and was blessed on 27 May 1976 in Naters ¹⁵⁶. Many didn't like the flag and its low manufacturing quality, so in 1983 a

second flag was made in Switzerland and adopted the same year. The flag's obverse has inscriptions in German while on the reverse side they are in French.



On 29 August 2006 both the new flag and the old flag, which had been kept in a glass show case in a restaurant, were transferred to the newly established Guard museum in a disused army bunker in Naters (Zentrum Garde), where they are on display today.



Lemania section

This section, covering the Vaud and Geneva cantons, adopted its flag on 27 September 1981, after a design by Pierre Tomasetti ¹⁵⁷. It bears the section's name in gold legible on both sides.



Zurich section

The Zurich section was established on 1 May 1960 (its name then was "Limmattal"). The section adopted a flag in 1985 ¹⁵⁸. The Heimgartner flag factory designed and made the flag according to the instructions of the section's flag committee, which wanted the Julius II coat-of-arms on a red shield in the center of a cross countercharged with the Vatican colours yellow and white quartering the field in the same shade of blue



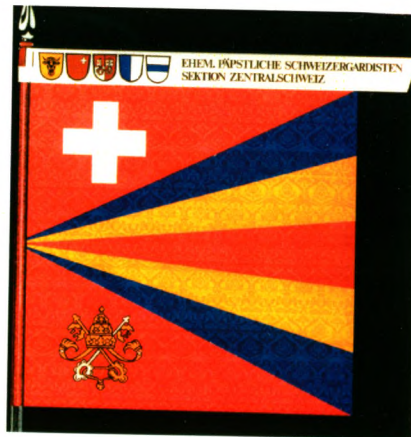
and orange yellow as on the guard uniform. The arms of Zurich, which have a lighter shade of blue, were set near the hoist. The hoist and top side of the flag shows a red border, which on top ends as a schwenkel, with the white inscription "VEREINIGUNG EHEMALIGER PÄPSTLICHER SCHWEIZERGARDISTEN

SEKTION ZÜRICH" on both sides.



Zentralschweiz Section

The central Swiss section came into being in 1960. In 1989 it adopted its current flag, which was designed by Lorenzo Odermatt [59]. A white schwenkel bears the arms of Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, Lucerne and Zug and the inscription in black "EHM. PÄPSTLICHE SCHWEIZERGARDISTEN SEKTION ZENTRAL-SCHWEIZ" on both sides.



Jura section



Exguards from this canton founded a section of the PSGVA in 1981 and adopted a flag of their own on 20 February 2005 [60]. The square flag measures 1,5m. It was designed by a flag committee of the section and manufactured by the Heimgartner company [61]. The flag has a schwenkel in the Vatican colours bearing on its obverse the inscription "Anciens Gardes Suisses Pontificaux du Jura" and on its reverse the inscription "JURASSIA" in black.



Basel section



Only one week after the Jura section had adopted its flag, the Basel section had its flag blessed also on 27 February 2005 in Muttenz. The section had been established in October 1955. In 2003 a flag committee began to produce various flag designs, and in 2004 two of them were presented to the general assembly of the section [62]. The delegates favoured a modern design, which then was produced by Heimgartner using a Julius-banner damask of pure silk. The flag measures 140x152 cms, bearing a red border at the hoist on both sides with the inscription in white "EHM. PÄPSTLICHE SCHWEIZERGARDISTEN REGION BASEL". As usual, the flag is kept in a glass show case.



Sections "Bern", "Solothurn", "Argovia", "Sottoselva" and "Svizzera italiana" do not have a flag.



Endnoten:

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9. Paul M. Krieg, op. cit., p. 298.
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12. Anonymous: «Memoria della Bandiera del Corpo della Guardia Svizzera Pont. a del Pontificato di Papa Gregorio XVI.», Archive of the Swiss Guard, Vatican City, no date. Extract: *Il Papa Pio VIII la riunì nel 1829. Sotto il Pontificato di Gregorio XVI non venne cambiato che lo Stemma del Pontifice. Sotto a questo veniva in quel tempo posto anche lo Stemma gentilizio del Capitano comandante la guardia pro tempore.*
13. This image is presented with kind permission of Capt. Roman Fringeli (owner of the print), of Mr. Marco Cupellaro (catalog editor) and of Mr. Alberto Medri (photographer). This image has first been published on page 77 of the catalogue of the Swiss Guard exhibition at the Knights of Columbus Museum in New Haven, Connecticut, USA, celebrating the 500 years of Papal Service, ISBN 0-9777867-2-2.
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29. Anonymus, "Memoria della Bandiera ... di Papa Pio IX.", op. cit., extract: *... l'attuale bandiera fatta nel 1829 si trova in pessimo stato, lacerata in molte parti ed i colori totalmente smontati, ciò che risulta maggiormente essendosi tolto lo stemma gentilizio dell'Capitano.*
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54. Robert Clément, Fribourg, letters sent to the author on 28 February 2007 and 12 May 2007.
55. Nicolaus Cadalbert, Rheineck, letter sent to the author on 19 March 2007.
56. Werner Bellwald, Sion, letter and documentation sent to the author on 25 January 2007.
57. Rinaldo Imhof, Begnins, letter and documentation sent to the author on 24 April 2007.
58. Stephan Vogler, Wasterkingen, letter sent to the author on 12 June 2007.
59. Lorenzo Odermatt, Emmenbrücke, letter and picture sent to the author on 22 June 2007.
60. Jean-Claude Veya, Develier, communication to the author on 6 June 2007.
61. Werner Affentranger, Bottmingen, letters and documentation sent to the author on 14 and 16 May 2007.
62. Thomas Mächler, Ettingen, letter and documentation sent to the author on 10 February 2007.

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 - Ills. 1a, 4a, 5, 7, 9, 26a: From Fernando del Arco: "Heraldica Papal", Editorial Bitacora S.A., San Fernando de Henares, 1993, ISBN 84-465-0001-9, pp. 173, 175, 177, 179, 181, 185.
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 - Ill. 33: Courtesy Swiss National Museum, Zurich.
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- Ills. 36, 38, 39b: From Donald Lindsay Galbreath: „Papal Heraldry“, second edition revised by Geoffrey Biggs, Heraldry Today, London, 1972, ISBN 0 90045522 5, title plate, plates VII, VIII.
- Ill. 42: From a postcard, BR. 059, da fotocolor Giordani, Città del Vaticano, n.d.
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- Ill. 51b: From “Regolamento Organico Disciplinare e Amministrativo della Guardia Svizzera Pontificia”, Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1976.
- Ill. 52b: From Stephen Slater: “The complete book of Heraldry”, Lorenz Books, London, 2002, ISBN 0-7548-1062-3, p. 150.
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- Ill. 97: Courtesy of Lorenzo Odermatt, Emmenbrücke, PSGVA, Zentralschweiz section.
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About the author



Emil Dreyer was born 1952 in Wettingen, Switzerland, his father being Swiss, his mother Spanish. He spent his childhood in Switzerland, his youth in Spain and returned to Switzerland for his studies in medicine at the University of Berne. Following postgraduate training in various hospitals for 9 years he settled in 1988 as a general practitioner in a suburb community near Berne. He is married and has three adult daughters.

Emil Dreyer has participated in many international FIAV congresses, has published irregularly in vexillological periodicals since 1977 and is a corresponding or subscribing member of the most important vexillological associations of FIAV as well as of several heraldic associations. He is engaged in flag consulting throughout Switzerland.

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