

MODERN UKRAINIAN CIVIC VEXILLOLOGY

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After the democratic changes in the East European countries in 80s and when the USSR has reached its collapse, Ukraine became an independent state. We received a possibility to regenerate the Ukrainian culture, traditions, customs. One of these programmes is a revival of the civic vexillology, because during the Russian occupation this branch was also lost. In this short article I shall comment the sources and traditions of the Ukrainian civic vexillology, the theory and practical usage and some examples at the end.

SOURCES AND TRADITIONS

Many towns of the Ukrainian lands were founded during the existing of the Kievan Realm (9th – 12th centuries) and the Galician-Volhynian State (13th – 14th c.) which was an extension of the Kievan Realm after its decline resulting from Tartar-Mongol invasion (1240). But we haven't any mentions about the civic banners from that times.

On the beginning of the 14th century some Ruthenian (Ukrainian) towns received the Magdeburg Right (*Jus Theutonicum seu Magdeburgensium* – in Latin) and appeared the first town arms which were used the seals and maybe on the flags. The earliest references to ancient banners of the Ukrainian lands (were occupied by Lithuania and Poland) we have on the 15th century, and on the towns – still more later (16th-17th c.) According to the description of the town flag of Bohuslav (1620)¹ or to the picture of the banners, which are considered as flags of Kyiv (1655)², we can say that the Ukrainian medieval municipal banners had a pictures of arms and decorative ornamental bordures. This tradition is also observed on the examples of the Kozak banners³.

From the end of the 18th century, when the Ukrainian lands were occupied by Russian and Austrian Empire sometimes separate towns used their flags, but there were as an exception. During tyhe communist regime as a “city banners” were used the state flags on the USSR or Ukrainian SSR, and only in cases when some city or town was decorated by any state order.

THEORY AND PRACTICE

The first possibility to began regeneration of the traditions of the Ukrainian municipal vexillology appeared in 1990 – after the first democratic elections to the Supreme Council of Ukraine and municipalities. Then we suggest to revival the old arms of L'viv (known from the 14th c) and to create a City banner. I was a councillor

¹ Balinski M, Lipinski T, - *Starozytna Polska*, Warszawa, 1844, vol II. P. 520

² Isayevich Ya, *Boyovi prapory kozats'koho viys'ka (seredyna XVII st.)*, *Ukrayins'kyi istorychnyj zhurnal*, 1963, N. 1, p. 85 – 87; Lepayavki S. *Prapory z 1655 (Pamyatky Ukrayiny)*, 1991, N. 3. P. 48 – 51.

³ *Ibid.*; *Zametka o kozatskikh znamenkach / Kievskaya starina – 1890*, N. 10 p. 153-156; *Hrushevs'kyi M.*, *Ilustrovana itoriya Ukrayuny*, Kyiv, L'viv, 1911, p. 509, etc.

of the L'viv City Council. And on the 5th of July, 1990 the first new flag of the Ukrainian city was adopted.

On the 9th of July our small research group founded the Ukrainian Heraldry Society (Ukrayins'ke Heral'dychne Tovarystvo) which began to regenerate civic heraldry and vexillology in Ukraine. We gave our proposals for the Supreme Council and the Government to create the Ukrainian Heraldic Service, which granted arms and flags, because now there are 1350 cities and towns and more than 200 former towns (which have a status of villages at the present time) in Ukraine. But this proposal didn't executing, and than we elaborated the main principles and rules of the development of the modern civic vexillology⁴. Now we give consultations and proposals for many cities and towns.

The basic principles are the following:

1. proportions of the towns banner are 1:1;
2. flag ha an equally (symmetrical) image on the both sides;
3. town banner must be made in one specimen; it is keeping in the Town Hall and using during the towns holidays, celebrations etc.

Flag designing is invisible with process of resumption of the old civic arms or creation of the new arms. But we put into practice different approaches in flag design. Some town banners have only the arms picture (charges), the other have a decorative bordures or stripes, the another have a combinations of the arms colours or separate motives. We consider, that such variety of designing assists for progress of the Ukrainian vexillology.

During the 1990 – 1995 more than 40 Ukrainian towns and cities received flags. As the some example of them:

1. L'viv (regional centre) – city flag is blue with yellow emblem (lion at the gate of the town wall with three towers). It has a bordure around three edges composed of blue and yellow triangles. Adopted by the City Council on July 5th, 1990.
2. Novyi Rozdil (L'viv region) – flag is blue with a yellow triangle, adopted on June 12th, 1991.
3. Bryukhovychi (L'viv region) – flag is white with three green fir-trees; at the bottom ia a green horizontal stripe; adopted on September 26th 1991.
4. Kosiv (Ivano-Frankovs'k Region) – flag is green with yellow church; at the top and bottom are two yellow horizontal stripes, adopted on November 13th 1991.
5. Turka (L'viv Region) – flag is yellow with a black aurochs (Tur – in Ukrainian) in the centre and green border around three edges, adopted on August 13th 1992
6. Vinnytsya (regional centre) – flag is red with centred white emblems (cross anchored, bottom two crossed sabres) and with border consists of a red and white triangles, adopted on May 16th 1993.
7. Dobromyl' (L'viv region) – flag is red with a yellow ball (an apple) and two crossed swords which have yellow grips; at the top is a yellow horizontal strip; adopted on June 25th 1993.

⁴ Grechylo A., Ukrayins'ke mis'ke prapornytstvo: tradytsiyi, vidrozhennya, perspektyvy / Chetvera naukova heral'dychna konferenciya, L'viv, 1994, p. 28 – 29.

8. Sosnivka (L'viv region) – flag is yellow with a red squirrel, at the top is a black horizontal stripe with two yellow cones and two white crossed miners' hammers; adopted on April 19th 1994.
9. Stara Vyzhivka (Volyn' region) – flag is yellow with a black heath-cock in the centre and it has three blue flowers placed in the white vertical stripe set at the hoist of the flag; adopted on May 6th 1994
10. Ivano-Frankivs'k (regional centre) – flag has three vertical stripes: blue, white and blue (in a 1: 3 : 1 ratio). In the centre is a City arms in shield with yellow town-crown on its top, adopted on February 17th 1995
11. Velyki Budyshcha (Poltava region) – flag is red with two yellow crossed wagons and with a border which consists of yellow and a blue triangles, adopted on February 22nd 1995.
12. Zbarazh (Ternopil region) – flag is blue with a white cross and with border which consists of blue and yellow triangles (Zbarazh has St. Georges as the town arms), adopted on March 23rd 1995.

Summary: The article presents the short sketch of the activity of the Ukrainian Heraldry Society in the development of the modern Ukrainian civic vexillology. New flag design is based on the old traditions and the main principles, which are worked by Society. The author gives an example of the new municipal flags of Ukraine.