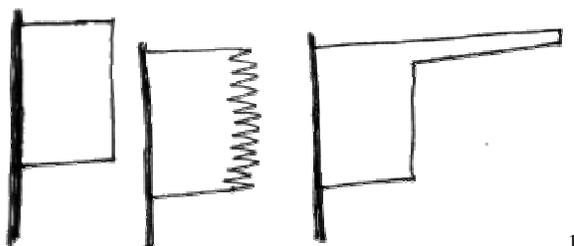


# Flags and Banners in the SCA

From an article written by Conrad von Regensberg The Complete Anachronist # 50

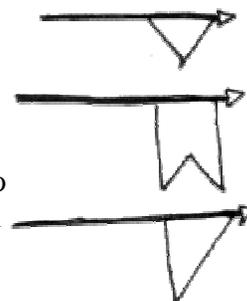
## The Banner

- a straightforward presentation of the owner's heraldic device or arms. The field of the banner corresponds exactly to the shield of a coat of arms, with dexter (the hoist) always next to the staff or pole and the sinister (the fly) at the opposite end. In shape, banners are either perpendicularly rectangular or square. Square cloth banners were often fringed on all sides but the hoist.
- Banners were generally constructed upon a stiff rigid foundation such as wood or metal. If they were made of cloth the banner was attached along the top edge to some sort of supporting strut. These types of construction prevented the banner from flapping and allowed the owner's arms to be displayed more effectively.



## The Pennon

- The pennon is a type of small flag suitable for hanging from such items as lances, spears, trumpets and so forth. Pennons are generally either single pointed or swallow tailed. A pennon is generally only charged with a badge, not with the arms. The badge is positioned on the pennon to the right angle of the pole so that the badge is upright when the lance is held at charge.



## The Pinsil

- The pinsil is peculiar to Scotland. It is triangular in shape and conforms to the normal hoist and fly orientation of most flags and is generally fringed on all sides except the hoist. The pinsil does not display the arms of the owner. In the hoist it features the owners crest, surrounded by a small belt or a circle inscribed

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.kwantlen.bc.ca/~donna/sca/flags/banner.html>

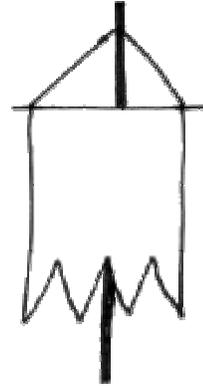
<sup>2</sup> <http://www.kwantlen.bc.ca/~donna/sca/flags/pennon.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.kwantlen.bc.ca/~donna/sca/flags/pinsil.html>

with a motto. It is also surmounted by the owners coronet of rank, if any. In the fly a subsidiary motto may be shown along with any plant badges the owner may have.

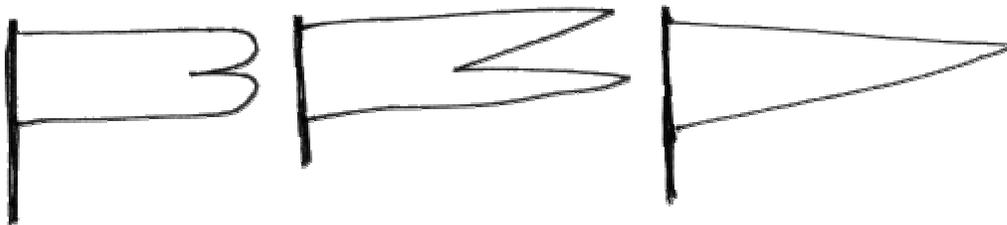
## The Gonfalon

- The gonfalon originated in early Italy. It is the direct descendant of the only true cloth flag used in the Roman Empire. Gonfalons were commonly used by the medieval church. A gonfalon is usually a large square or rectangular flag that is displayed on a transverse bar slung from a pole or spear. Some gonfalons feature swallow tails or multiple tongues. <sup>4</sup>



## The Standard

- Historically, standards have come in a variety of shapes; some tapering to a point in the fly, some swallow tailed and some with two rounded ends. Modern standards generally have a single rounded end at the fly. The length far exceeds the width and it is wider at the hoist than it is at the fly. They range from 6 feet long (for outside your pavilion) to a standard of about 30 feet long for processing.
- The medieval standard never featured the entire arms or complete achievements of its owner. It displayed badges and similar cognizances and mottos. The hoist most often featured a national design of some sort. (The east kingdom has authorized the use of the blue tiger.) The remainder of the field of the standard tended to be divided up in some fashion between the owner's livery (the principal metal and color of the owners coat of arms.)
- The field was charged with the owner's badge or with various badges. Sometimes a motto was included, displayed either on white bends or on scrolls.
- The whole standard was sometimes surrounded by a fringe of gold or some other tincture and in some instances the fringe was an alternating single row of squares in the livery colours. Many standards had no fringe at all.



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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.kwantlen.bc.ca/~donna/sca/flags/gonfalon.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.kwantlen.bc.ca/~donna/sca/flags/standard.html>

## The Viking

- Perhaps the best-known visual representation of these events comes from the Bayeux Tapestry. The Bayeux Tapestry depicts a number of banners. At least one, and possibly two of these banners may be representations of a Raven Banner.



- Related to the Raven Banners are the "windvanes" or prow-ornaments from Viking ships that were later reused ashore as wind-vanes, surviving to the present day. These vanes adorned the prow of the Viking ship and were not made of cloth but rather a metal or wood. The metals were believed to be brass, or copper.



This small flag is a cloth recreation of a Viking flag. In recreating Thorsons Viking flag I replaced the raven with Thorsons personal badge, the lion rampant.

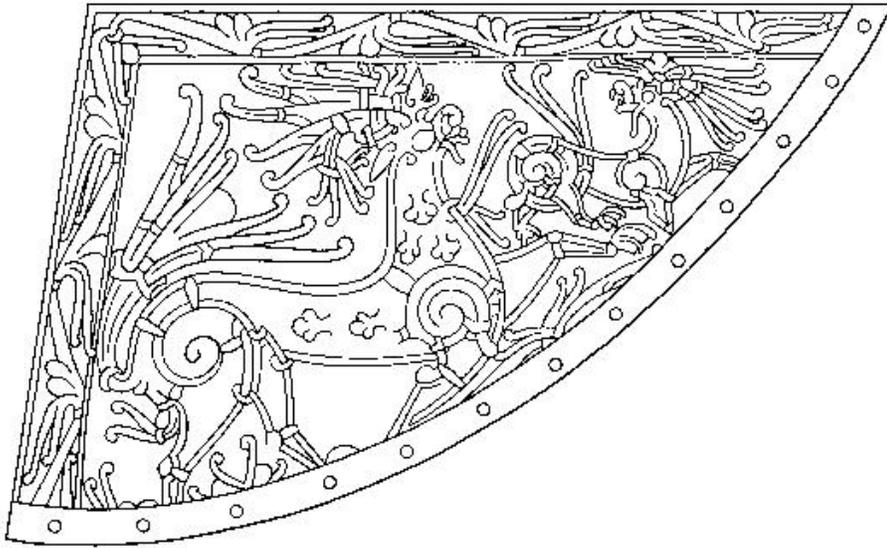
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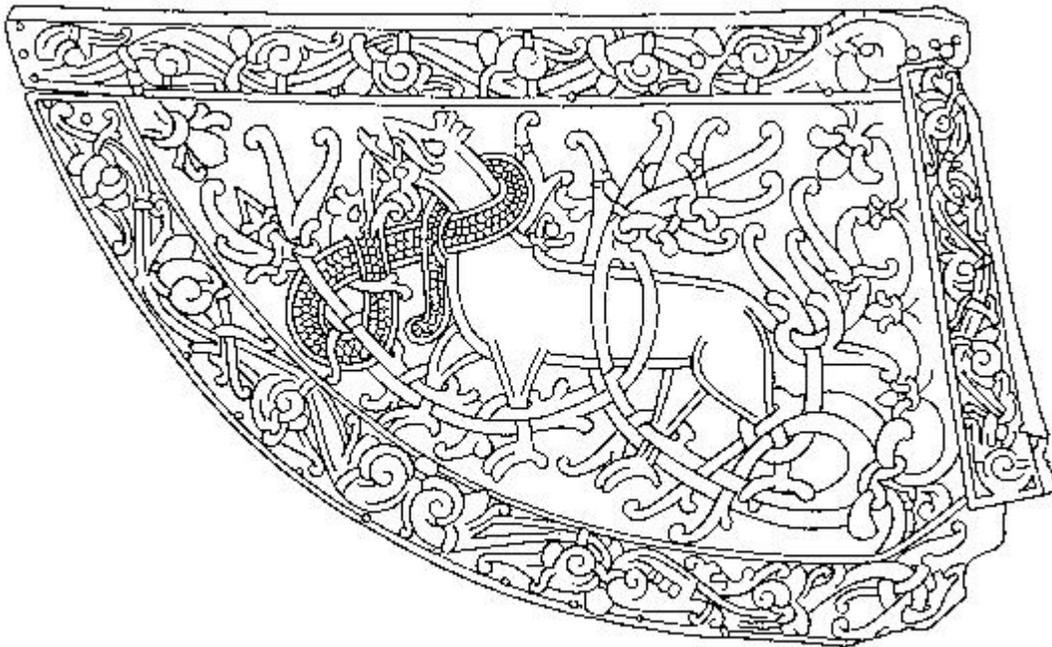
<sup>6</sup> <http://anyflag.com/history/viking.htm>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.vikinganswerlady.com/banners.htm>



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In this drawing of a windvane there are holes depicted along the outside edge of the vane. It is surmised, but not proven, that these were for attaching streamers of cloth to them.



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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.cs.vassar.edu/~capriest/display.html>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.cs.vassar.edu/~capriest/display.html>

## ***Construction methods***

### **Gonfalon**

I begin with a piece of broadcloth 45 inches in width. After hemming it will be 40 inches wide. The length of the gonfalon is 90 inches, and after hemming its dimensions are 86. I attach tabs along the top of the gonfalon for the transverse pole.

### **Standard**

The measurements for the standard is 22 inches at the hoist and 90 inches in length. The tail takes up the last 1/3 of the flag.

### **Viking Flag**

For the Viking flag I measured a square piece of cloth approx 24 inches. On two sides I sewed sleeves for a supporting strut and the hoist. On the curved edge I cut out a piece of black cloth with embattlements, equally spaced around the curve. Each of the embattlements were 4 inches with 4 inches between them. I then attached the black fabric to the white base of the flag.

The lion was appliquéd in the same manner as the previous banners.

### **Fabric**

Various different fabrics can be used for the banners. I have used broadcloth, cotton, silk, polyester, and different weights of canvas. Each have their pros and cons. Silk and some lightweight polyesters fly beautifully in the wind but they can be expensive. Cottons and Broadcloths are cheap but they will fade in the sun and do not fly as well. Canvas is durable but it does not fly well.

Whatever you decide to use, make sure to do a layout of your design before cutting fabric.