

Papacy—were such as led to friction and dispute, and the voting was often called in question and frequently nullified. The consuls, from stress of circumstances, tended to make themselves masters and to perpetuate their power within a class. Soon the communes were copying both the organisation and customs of the feudal fiefs. Their chief consuls acquired the right to levy war in the name of the city.



The communes, like the city states of Greece, took to fighting each other when not resisting a common foe.

GUELPH AND Ghibelline. The rival parties of Empire and Papacy found their counterparts within the commune, and to these major factions was soon to be added the age-old struggle between the wealthy and poor. Later on, when the poor had been suppressed, struggles for power between rival wealthy families and rival factions of a triumphant party, continued the popular taste for local warfare.

The names of the factions often varied with the cities. Some factions, arising out of the family feuds, long outlasted the elimination of the weaker family, and party names gradually took on a different meaning in different areas. This occurred with the well-known Guelph and Ghibelline parties whose names were common to both Italy and Germany where they had originated during the rivalry between the House of Franconia and Bavaria for the Holy Roman Empire.

The name Ghibelline came from Weiblingen, a castle belonging to the Franconians, Guelph from Welf, the name

of a prince of the Bavarian House. In other words, the parties were dynastic. In Italy, however, the party names had a different significance; the Guelphs were the Papal supporters.

Florence and Tuscany were predominantly Guelph since the time of Countess Matilda, while the Ghibellines were the Emperor's supporters.

XIITH CENTURY: COMMERCIAL PROGRESS—Prior to the end of the XIth Century, Florence was slowly building up her industries and consolidating her commercial activities in an atmosphere which was remarkably free from the factional disturbances which provided almost the main outlet for the energies of neighbouring communes. She was, in fact, the last city in Italy to be infected with the virus of the Guelph and Ghibelline factions. This was largely due to a successful suppression of any party activities of the nobility who appear to have been entirely subordinated politically to the interests of the wealthier borghese.

Remarkable steps, many of them extremely undemocratic and contrary to all modern conceptions of the individual's rights, were taken to assimilate the *signorile* or noble elements with the townfolk. Badges of rank, and even family names, where these indicated origins from the territorial nobility, were suppressed. At certain stages this class was even excluded from holding city offices, despite the fact that they might be eminently suitable as candidates.



Even though Florence thus succeeded in avoiding the ruinous struggles which affected other Italian communes in the XIVth Century, she did not avoid creating similar classes from her own citizens nor did she escape the establishment of local tyrants. The vacancy left by the suppression of