

## **A Brief but Utterly True History of the Gonfalon**

To begin with I must point out that various claims and rumors have been circulating for years about the origin and tradition of bearing Gonfalons (flags, often with an emblem, carried on poles). Of course the most widely spread and generally popular of these rumors states that gonfalons were first used in Italia in the middle ages to represent various groups such as trade guilds or noble houses. Of course this claim is nothing but a load of bull made up to conceal the awful and yet utterly amazing truth.

Now there may be questions as to my authority on this matter and so I'd like to explain some about my expertise in the field of gonfalon studies. Two years ago I was sitting in a McDonalds enjoying a BigMac and a chocolate shake when all the sudden a raving mad man ran in screaming something about tapioca and Denmark. Well normally I would have just ignored such an outburst but in his lunatic rampage he accidentally knocked over my shake. Well I was pissed to say the least and I confronted the fellow about it saying something like "hey dude, I know that you are crazy, and that tapioca pudding is delicious, and Denmark is a nice place to live, but man you just spilt my perfectly good shake. That busts my chops dude, . . . busts my chops." Well the guy felt pretty bad and offered to buy me a new shake and so I accept his apology and asked him to join me in a rough and tough fry eating contest. Let me tell you that man could eat fries like no other. As we sat digesting our greasy eats this fellow suddenly said to me "son how'd you like to have a secret tome that explains the mysteries of the universe?" Well, I thought to myself, who wouldn't want such a marvelous tome? So I said yes and the guy pulled a great leather bound book from out of his beard (that is right, he had huge beard big enough to conceal large leather bound books). He handed over the book which was quite impressive and then proceeded to sing various lullabies in a mix of German and Cantonese in a stunning tenor voice. I couldn't wait to dive into the secrets of the universe so I left my insane friend and went strait home. Once comfortable on my couch I began to read. It took me a good year to get through the book but having finished it I posses infinite knowledge of all things that were, are, and will be, thus meaning that I know the truth about gonfalons and their origins and purposes.

The gonfalon was originally invented by an old lady named Mary Wellstone Hawkin in the year 1832 in Sussex England for the sole purpose of showing that a flag with an emblem can indeed be carried on a long pole in a vertical manner. The unfortunate thing for Mary Wellstone Hawkin was that as she was on her way to display her invention she accidentally stumbled through a time ripple and ended up in the year 1254 in Florence Italy. Now it seems that Florence had no need for gonfalons in the year 1254 and Mary was forced to make a living selling snail shells which was not a thriving business at the time. But gonfalons were not a complete loss. A few years later in 1263 Florence was assaulted by massive marauding flocks of vicious pterodactyls. The people of the region were horror struck and at a complete loss as to what to do. It was a dangerous time to wander out of doors as one never knew when a ravenous winged reptile would swoop down from the heavens and grab an unexpected person. One day Mary Wellstone Hawkin was in her smallish hut making some soup when she happened upon her old gonfalon. Pleased with her fine stitching she decided to display the flag outside. What Mary had forgotten was the constant threat of pterodactyls. As she

wandered outside to display her gonfalon a huge feral pterodactyl swept in for the kill. Just as the beast was about to snatch her up in its talons Mary raised her gonfalon and the giant winged lizard panicked, horrified by the brilliant display of colors. Unwittingly Mary had discovered the remedy to Florence's pterodactyl problems. Within a few months gonfalons had spread throughout Italy to prevent any random pterodactyl attacks, and within only a few decades gonfalons were in use throughout much of Europe.

The sad ending to the story is that it has long been forgotten. Pterodactyls went extinct along with other great flying reptiles and dinosaurs in the year 1612. People continued to carry the gonfalons as a matter of tradition but very soon, by the year 1613, everybody had forgot their original use (they had also forgotten that only a year before they had shared the Earth with giant dinosaurs, strange isn't it?).

Well I am sure that there are some questions about the legitimacy of the tome from which I learned everything that I know, especially seeing as it was given to me by a stark raving lunatic. Well I say doubt all you want but the truth is the truth and maybe someday (specifically the year 2036) when pterodactyls return through another time ripple you'll all be damn happy that I have passed this information on.