

= Funerary Monument to Sir John Hawkwood =

The Funerary Monument (or Equestrian Monument) to Sir John Hawkwood is a fresco by Paolo Uccello , commemorating English condottiero John Hawkwood , commissioned in 1436 for Florence 's Basilica di Santa Maria del Fiore . The fresco is an important example of art commemorating a soldier @-@ for @-@ hire who fought in the Italian peninsula and is a seminal work in the development of perspective .

The politics of the commissioning and recommissioning of the fresco have been analyzed and debated by historians . The fresco is often cited as a form of " Florentine propaganda " for its appropriation of a foreign soldier of fortune as a Florentine hero and for its implied promise to other condottieri of the potential rewards of serving Florence . The fresco has also been interpreted as a product of internal political competition between the Albizzi and Medici factions in Renaissance Florence , due to the latter 's modification of the work 's symbolism and iconography during its recommissioning .

The fresco is the oldest extant and authenticated work of Uccello , from a relatively well @-@ known aspect of his career compared to the periods before and after its creation . The fresco has been restored (once by Lorenzo di Credi , who added the frame) and is now detached from the wall ; it has been repositioned twice in modern times .

= = John Hawkwood = =

Hawkwood had a long military career and a complicated relationship with Florence . He fought for England during the Hundred Years War and then with the " Great Company " which had harassed the Avignon Papacy . After gaining command of the " White Company " from Albert Sterz in the 1360s , Hawkwood led the company across the Alps in 1363 in the employ of John II , Marquess of Montferrat , to take part in his war against Milan . Hawkwood and the " White Company " remained in Italy , accepting money from many city @-@ states , both to wage war and to refrain from it . Hawkwood 's reputation as one of the ablest condottieri in the peninsula developed in the ensuing decades , during which he was employed (by both sides) in the Pisan ? Florentine War (1363 ? 1364) , notably winning the Battle of Cascina (1364) for Florence , in the wars of Perugia against the Pope (1369) , and in the service of Bernabò Visconti in his war against a coalition that included Pisa and Florence , and even (in 1372) the Marquis of Monteferrato .

Hawkwood then entered the service of Pope Gregory XI in his wars against Milan (1372 ? 1375) and in the War of the Eight Saints (1375 ? 1378) , during which Hawkwood helped put down the Florentine @-@ instigated rebellions in the Papal States . During the conflict , Hawkwood was paid 130 @,@ 000 florins ? which was extracted from local clergy , bishops , abbots , monasteries , and ecclesiastical institutions ? to confine his activities to suppressing the rebellions in the Papal States , rather than directly attacking Florence . Hawkwood also received a 600 florin annual salary for the next five years and a lifetime annual pension of 1 @,@ 200 florins .

Hawkwood married Donnina , the illegitimate daughter of Bernabò Visconti , in 1377 . In that same year he defected to Florence . Hawkwood 's 1377 massacre at Cesena during the twilight of his papal employment in the War of the Eight Saints continues to tarnish his legacy . Thus , until 1377 , Hawkwood had principally served the Visconti of Milan and their allies in Pisa , Lucca , and Siena , usually against the interests of Florence , making him an ironic candidate for a monument in the Duomo of Florence . At the bidding of Pisa , Hawkwood attacked the Brunelleschi family 's Villa Petraia in Castello , burned Florentine subject territories around Incisa after defeating Florentine condottiero Ranuccio Farnese il Vecchio , and even taunted Florence from outside the city walls .

However , Hawkwood was the de facto commander @-@ in @-@ chief (Captain @-@ General) of Florence 's military from 1377 until immediately prior to his death in 1394 . Hawkwood won many victories for Florence , including his suppression of the Ciompi revolt in January 1382 , but contemporary Florentines would have regarded Hawkwood 's successful retreat from Milan late in his career , across three rivers ? including the notorious Oglio ? and across a barren countryside , as his " greatest military feat " .

Hawkwood , now in his seventies , made preparations to return to England , where he had been sending money to acquire land , and set up a chantry . Just as he was liquidating his affairs in Italy , he died , on March 17 , 1394 .

In 1395 , Richard II of England petitioned Florence for the return of Hawkwood 's body , as he had done for Robert de Vere , Duke of Ireland , the local magnate to the Hawkwood family in England , in whose service he had begun his military career . Florence acquiesced to Richard II 's request in a June 3 , 1395 letter :

Our devotion can deny nothing to the eminence of your highness . We will leave nothing undone that is possible to do , so that we may fulfill your good pleasure . So , therefore , although we consider it reflected glory on us and our people to keep the ashes and bones of the late brave and most magnificent captain John Hawkwood , who , as commander of our army , fought most gloriously for us and who at public expense was interred in the principal church of Santa Reparata ... nevertheless , according to the tenor of your request , we freely concede permission that his remains shall return to their native land .

However , it remains an open question whether Hawkwood 's remains were ever transferred to England , to the tomb prepared for him at St. Peter 's in Sible Hedingham , or whether his remains were reburied in 1405 under the old choir of the Duomo , of which record has been lost since it was repaved in the 16th century . In any case , the tomb monument would have run into difficulty , as a ban on tombs above floor level in the Cathedral was passed on April 5 , 1400 .

= = Context = =

In the Quattrocento , it was traditional for condottieri like Hawkwood to be buried in major public churches , even when their careers had produced mixed results for the city @-@ state in question . The genre of the equestrian statue was revived during the Quattrocento for the purpose of commemorating condottieri ; Donatello 's Equestrian Statue of Gattamelata (c . 1447 ? 1453) in Padua is the first surviving bronze equestrian statue since Ancient Rome . Tibertino Brandolino was interred at San Francesco in Venice ; Jacopo de ' Cavalli at SS . Giovanni e Paolo in Rome ; Paolo Savelli at Basilica dei Frari in Venice , along with a wooden equestrian statue on a marble sarcophagus , which ? along with the bronze horses on the façade of St. Mark ? may have inspired Uccello 's Hawkwood ; and Konrad Aichelberg at a church in Pisa . When such burials were not possible , frescoes were an acceptable substitute : Guidoriccio da Fogliano was painted on horseback by Simone Martini in Palazzo Pubblico in Siena in 1328 ; Pietro Farnese was depicted in a papier @-@ mâché equestrian monument atop a sarcophagus in the Florence Cathedral in 1363 .

Holding ever more lavish funeral ceremonies for fallen condottieri was only one way in which Italian city @-@ states competed with each other to attract the services of the most skilled mercenaries . Hawkwood 's funeral was sandwiched between the funerals in Siena of Giovanni d 'Azzo degli Ubaldini ? who had been poisoned by the Florentines in the Visconti wars ? and Giovanni " Tedesco " da Pietramala . The commissioning of Uccello to repaint the fresco came at the " climax " of a war with Lucca , which had recently begun a monument to honor Niccolò Piccinino , in contrast to Piccinino 's defaming portrait in the Palazzo della Signoria in 1428 , depicting him hanging upside @-@ down in chains , which was " depaint [ed] " in April 1430 .

= = Commissioning = =

= = Background = = =

On August 20 , 1393 ? when the Signoria , at the suggestion of Coluccio Salutati , voted to erect a marble statue of Hawkwood in the Duomo , " that brave men may know that the commune of Florence recompenses true service " ? Hawkwood was liquidating his Tuscan properties and preparing to return to England . It was unprecedented for the Signoria to vote to erect a monument

to a living person in the cathedral . The ambiguous plans of the Signoria ? which likely was aware of Hawkwood 's health status ? might well have been for a tomb rather than a cenotaph ; Hawkwood died soon after , on March 17 , 1394 . The Signoria went to great lengths (unsuccessfully) to entice Donnina to remain in the city ? voting to transfer various sums of money to her (in exchange for Hawkwood 's Tuscan fortress) , despite " thorny legal issues " which required multiple acts of the city council ? indicating to some extent the market value of Hawkwood 's symbolic capital .

Hawkwood 's March 20 funeral began in the Piazza della Signoria , continued to the Battistero di San Giovanni , where his body was placed on the baptismal font for public viewing , and culminated in the Cathedral , at a cost of 410 florins , not counting the substantial expenses of the Guilds .

The plans for Hawkwood 's commemoration were modified on December 2 , 1395 , when it was decided to also rework the wooden monument of Pietro Farnese , the hero of the Pisan war , and to place marble tomb monuments to Farnese and Hawkwood on the north aisle , facing the high altar . Painters Agnolo Gaddi and Giuliano Arrighi were selected by a committee to sketch directly onto the Duomo wall models for the Hawkwood and Farnese tombs . Although neither tomb was realized , documentary evidence suggests that a painting of Hawkwood ? with a figure of Hawkwood by Gaddi and a sarcophagus by Pesello ? was completed by June 16 , 1396 . Historian Frances Stonor Saunders speculates that Uccello may have based his representation of Hawkwood on this early painting and that the earlier painting may have been based on a death mask of Hawkwood . The Hawkwood fresco is situated in the third bay of the northern wall , today flanked by paintings of Dante (c . 1455) and a similar fresco monument to fellow mercenary Niccolò da Tolentino (1456 , by Andrea del Castagno) ; fictive tombs in fresco of two humanist ecclesiasts ? Bishop Corsini (c . 1422 , probably by Giovanni dal Ponte) and Fra Luigi de ' Marsigli (c . 1439 by Bicci di Lorenzo) , an Augustinian monk who founded a literary academy ? are much smaller than those of the two condottieri . The fresco probably came to replace the tomb (rather than serving as a place marker for it) for reasons of expedience and frugality , although on these points there is little documentary evidence .

= = = Fresco = = =

The fresco was initially commissioned , decades after Hawkwood 's death , in May 1433 by the Albizzi government , just months before the regime 's collapse . Perhaps the project was an attempt by the Albizzi to hearken back to a time when the oligarchic elite of Florence had been more aligned with their own conservative interests . On July 13 , 1433 , design competition notices for the new monument were placed at the Duomo , the Baptistry , and Orsanmichele . The instigators of the renewed project were the grandsons of Guido di Soletto del Pera Baldovinetti , one of the ambassadors who (unsuccessfully) pleaded with Hawkwood to return to Florence 's service in 1389 , and Donato Velluti , a 14th @-@ century military and political historian . It is almost inconceivable that the commissioners of the monument would not have regarded Hawkwood as a self @-@ interested mercenary , knowing that he often acted against the interests of Florence . After the launching of the design competition , in September 1433 , Cosimo and Averardo de ' Medici were exiled from Florence , for ? among other things ? allegedly attempting to embroil Florence in a war with Lucca .

= = = Recommissioning = = =

After Cosimo 's triumphant return to Florence , rather than scrapping the project , in May 1436 the Medici regime hired Uccello to replace the Gaddi and Pesello fresco . Hugh Hudson suggests that it would have been too risky for the Medici to cancel the Albizzi project , so they instead shrewdly modified it to fit their interests . There is , of course , some weakness to attributing the commissioning and re @-@ commissioning of the monument to Albizzi or Medici intrigues , as only two (maybe three) of the eight operai on July 13 , 1433 were members of the Albizzi faction and only one was a Medici when it was resumed on May 18 , 1436 ; yet the influences of both factions doubtlessly did not require blood relation . Around this time , documents attest to multiple repairs of

a nearby window , opening the possibility that the original fresco had experienced water damage , and would have needed to be restored in any case . Others have suggested that the recommissioning was part of the " refurbishing " of the cathedral associated with its rededication as Santa Maria del Fiore by Pope Eugene IV in March 1436 . Yet , Borsi concludes that " undoubtedly under pressure from the Medici " the operai discarded their plans for a straightforward restoration of the Gaddi fresco and opted for a completely new monument .

= = = Uccello = = =

The choice of Paolo Uccello (born in Florence in 1397) , who had apprenticed for Lorenzo Ghiberti from June 1407 , busying himself polishing the " Gates of Paradise " , may have been an attempt to find a painter knowledgeable in bronze and statuary , which the fresco was to mimic . For centuries , art historians have regarded Uccello as a less @-@ prominent artist at the time of the Hawkwood commission : he is not mentioned in the preface of Alberti 's *De Pictura* , nor in Domenico Veneziano 's 1438 letter to Piero di Cosimo de ' Medici listing the major contemporary painters ; nor have art historians even attempted to speculate that he studied the frescoes at the Brancacci Chapel . One difficulty for art historians attempting to gauge Uccello 's reputation at the time of the Hawkwood 's commissioning is the 10 @-@ year blind spot in the reconstruction of Uccello 's career between 1415 ? when Uccello was made a member of the Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries (*Arte dei Medici e Speziali*) ? and his trip to Venice in 1425 . Similarly , all the works of Uccello 's Venetian period are either missing or else of uncertain attribution : Uccello is thought to have made a no @-@ longer @-@ existing mosaic of St. Peter on the façade of St. Mark 's Basilica , to have collaborated on the design of architectural structures for the mosaics in the Mascoli Chapel of St. Mark 's by Michele Giambono , and possibly to have made some geometrical pattern decorations for the interior of St. Mark 's .

Uccello was known to have been in Venice in 1427 and to have returned to Florence by 1431 , allowing a second window for historiographical speculation : some say he may have gone to Rome ; others say he went directly to Florence . Uccello probably painted the Creation of the Animals and Creation of Adam (c . 1431) in the upper part of one of the bays of the Chiostro Verde (the " Green Cloister ") in Santa Maria Novella , which ? like the Hawkwood , as specified in its commission ? is in the " terra verde " grisaille manner . Perhaps Uccello worked on the stories from the life of the Virgin and St. Stephen in the Chapel of Our Lady of the Assumption in the Prato Cathedral around 1435 , although Pope @-@ Hennessy , Pudenko , and Salmi all dispute this attribution .

Thus , the Florence Cathedral is the repository of all the extant works of Uccello whose attribution is firmly rooted in contemporary documents : two murals ? the Hawkwood and the Clock Face with Four Heads of Prophets or Evangelists (1443) ? and two stained glass windows ? Resurrection (1443 ? 1444) and Nativity (1443 ? 1444) . The Hawkwood is Uccello 's " earliest dated and fully authenticated extant work " .

= = = Modifications = = =

Uccello 's Hawkwood was completed , only to be ordered redone by the capo maestro of the Opera del Duomo , on June 28 , 1436 . Uccello was found not to have been at fault on July 6 , and paid for both his first and second versions , the latter of which was finished before August 31 . Incidentally , the second version ? copied from the original , rather than direct observation ? is the only true extant testimony to Hawkwood 's appearance . The demanded redesign ? which was ordered soon after post @-@ Albizzi members secured a majority among the operai ? is at the heart of any discussion about the political implications of the fresco . For centuries , art historians have argued that the rejection was rooted in questions of perspective and color , while more recent scholarship suggests it was the content of the fresco to which the capo maestro objected . The specific objections of the capo maestro are not documented ? except that the fresco was " not painted as it should be " , but it is clear that only the portion containing the horse and rider was to be erased and redone . A preparatory drawing in the Uffizi with the same static scene is the primary clue to the appearance of

the original fresco , in which Hawkwood was apparently more armored , taller , and ? along with his horse ? in a more militaristic stance . The Hawkwood thus both participated in and reinforced the Quattrocento trend that every Florentine public monument to a soldier of fortune employ a parade horse rather than a battle charger , in less than complete armor , and at a pace more suited for reviewing troops than charging into battle . A study which subjected the drawing to ultraviolet rays confirmed that Uccello had originally depicted Hawkwood as " more threatening " , with his baton raised and horse " at the ready " .

The fresco 's current appearance is not identical to the version redone by Uccello . The frame with candelabra @-@ pattern decorations was added by Lorenzo di Credi in 1524 , when he restored the fresco . In 1688 , it was restored again , in refurbishments celebrating the marriage of Ferdinand de ' Medici and Violante of Bavaria . The fresco was restored and transferred to canvas in 1842 by Giovanni Rizzoli and moved to the west wall of the Duomo , only to be moved back to the north wall in 1947 , after being mounted on a masonite and aluminum support . It has been argued , based on Uccello 's alleged use of Masaccio 's eye @-@ point perspective , that the painting was originally five feet higher than it stands today . The fully restored fresco was also briefly taken down in 1953 ? 1954 to be shown in the " Quattro Maestri " (" Four Masters ") exhibition in Florence .

= = Style = =

The reworked fresco has been seen as " classicizing " the image of the condottieri , with the terra verde technique giving the conceit of an equestrian bronze statue . The horse 's proportions are based loosely upon those prescribed by Alberti in *De equo animante* , which in turn is based upon the anonymous *Sonetto del Cavallo Perfetto* ; however , in many ways the horse departs radically from Alberti 's ideal of a harmonious and " lithe " creature in the style of Leonello d 'Este 's monument to Niccolò III d 'Este , Arco del Cavallo in Ferrara . Furthermore , Uccello 's perspective in the Hawkwood monument openly flaunted Alberti 's conception of perspective as demarcated in *De Pictura* (1435 , translated into Italian as *Della Pittura* in 1436) : the vanishing point is at the eye @-@ level of the spectator rather than within the field of the fresco , for example . Alberti 's *De re aedificatoria* also objected to statues of soldiers and / or lay burials in churches . Although the fresco is often called " monochrome " , its background is dark red , the horse and tomb are accented in red , black , white , and orange . The Trompe @-@ l 'œil perspective from the base , the chiaroscuro relief @-@ effect of the horse and the rider , and lighting from the left are similar to Masaccio 's Holy Trinity . The connection to Masaccio is so strong (or so often reported) that Francesco Albertini actually attributed the work to Massaccio in 1510 . However , Uccello 's fresco has two viewpoints : the horse and rider are painted as if on level with the spectator , and the cenotaph is seen as if from below .

A variety of explanations have been proposed for this split perspective , which has even been suggested by Frederick Hartt to have been a practical joke . Entangled in these questions of perspective is Vasari 's criticism of the horse 's raising both its right legs at the same time , which would likely topple the horse , if accomplished . However , it is clear from Uccello 's other works that he was not interested in using perspective simply for realism ; rather , Uccello " placed in an unnatural , fantastic overall atmosphere , the fruit of this painter 's complex and unique imagination " . This style has even been cited as an example of synthetic realism in line with the late Gothic movement .

= = = Inscription = = =

Underscoring the classical elements of the fresco is the Latin inscription , added on December 17 , 1436 and penned by Bartolomeo Fortini de Orlandini , son of Benedetto di Ser Landi Fortini , former treasurer of Florence and apprentice of Spinello Alberti , one of the chief negotiators of Florence during the War of the Eight Saints ? the first such inscription on an antique sarcophagus in a Florentine painting . The inscription reads : " Ioannes Acutus eques brittanicus dux aetatis suae cautissimus et rei militaris peritissimus habitus est " (John Hawkwood , British knight , most prudent

leader of his age and most expert in the art of war) . The epitaph , likely a reference to Hawkwood 's aforementioned *cautissimus* (" most prudent ") retreat across the Oglio , is borrowed from the eulogy of Roman general Fabius Maximus , who wore down Hannibal by tactical retreat and avoiding battle . The eulogy of Fabius Maximus comports so distinctly with Quattrocento humanism that some scholars have even dubbed it a " Renaissance fake " .

= = Interpretation = =

By classicizing the *condottieri* , the portrait may have represented an opportunity to ? as Leonardo Bruni had advocated ? " revive the ancient form of tribute " by choosing a " long @-@ dead and uncontroversial subject " . Mallett has interpreted the fresco as a Medicean attempt to exalt " the praiseworthiness of *condottieri* to a populace with mixed feelings " . In fact , Cosimo may have allowed the former Albizzi project to go through merely to pave the way for a similar honor for Niccolò da Tolentino (died 1435) , a *condottiero* whom the Medici would have favored over Hawkwood . The Tolentino fresco was commissioned 20 years after the soldier of fortune 's death , and was specified in its contract to be painted in " the same manner and form as the Hawkwood " . Thus , the recommissioning of the portrait may be read as part of an ongoing debate over the appropriateness of *condottieri* for a Republic . Bruni raises this subject in *De militia* (1420) , arguing for a standing Florentine militia , especially given the close ties between Tolentino and the Medici . Intending to depict Hawkwood as an " obedient captain conducting an inspection of troops " , the conceit of Hawkwood patiently reviewing troops is " suggestive of a loyal communal servant " .

The Medici may have wished to emphasize that point that any *condottiero* , no matter how hostile or fickle , could be bought off and manipulated to Florentine interests and truly Florentinized . Attempts to claim Hawkwood as Florentine were well underway even before his death ; for example , Pier Paolo Vergerio the Elder wrote in 1391 that Hawkwood " no longer has any foreign blood ... and has become regenerated more strongly and more healthful in fiber and body under the moderating sky of Italy " . Such a viewpoint has even crept into modern scholarship : the 19th @-@ century Italian historian Ercole Ricotti called Hawkwood " the last of the foreign *condottieri* or the first of the Italian ones " ; his 18th @-@ century biography Domenico Maria Manni called him " general captain of Florentine armies " and virtually ignored two decades of Hawkwood 's service to other city @-@ states ; even in the 20th century , Friedrich Gaupp attempted to characterize Hawkwood 's direct attack on Florence as a " marriage proposal " .