



Paolo Uccello, (c. 1396 – 1475), was a painter from Florence in Italy, during the time known as the Early Renaissance. He is famous as one of the first painters of the Italian Renaissance to use perspective in his pictures.

Most of what we know about Uccello comes from Giorgio Vasari, who wrote Paolo's biography about 75 years after Uccello died. Uccello was born about the year 1396, in the city of Florence. Vasari says that he was called Uccello, which means "Bird", because he loved all animals and would often paint them, but he loved birds best of all. When he was about 11 years old, he was sent to be trained in the workshop of one of the most famous artists in Florence, a young man called Lorenzo Ghiberti.

Ghiberti was famous because he had won an important competition to make a huge set of beautiful doors for the oldest church in the city. The doors took 27 years to make, so in that time, lots of different artists helped in the making of them, and lots of talented young people like Uccello were trained in the workshop. Uccello worked there for 8 years.

While Uccello was still quite young he got an important job to do, all by himself. He was asked to paint some frescoes showing stories of different saints for the monks of a Church of San Miniato, on a mountain above Florence. It was a large beautiful church, but the monks at the monastery did not eat expensive food. They only ate bread and cheese. So, Uccello also ate nothing but bread and cheese for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, sometimes made into soup. After a few weeks he thought he was turning into a cheese! So he ran away from the monastery and went back to Florence, leaving his work unfinished.

