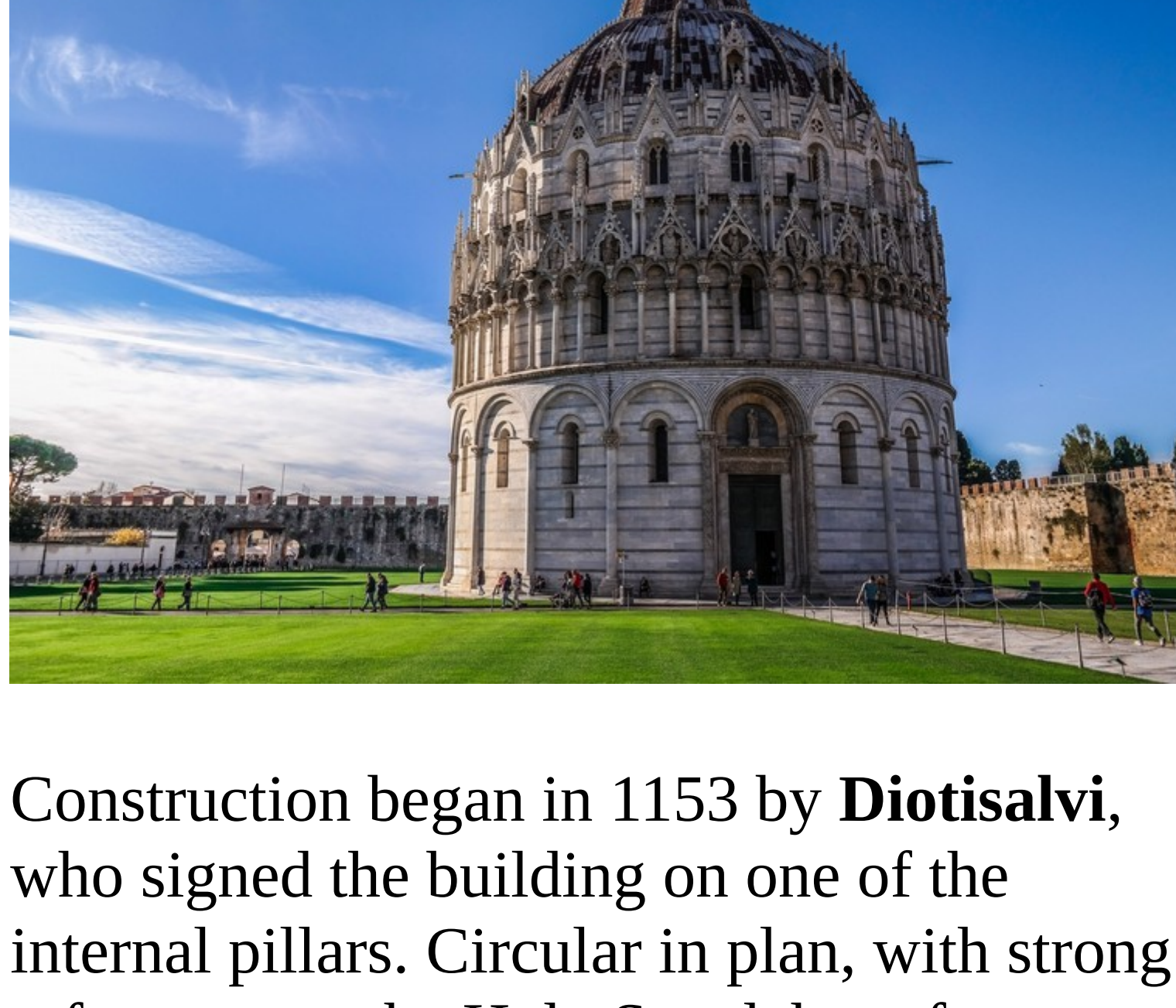


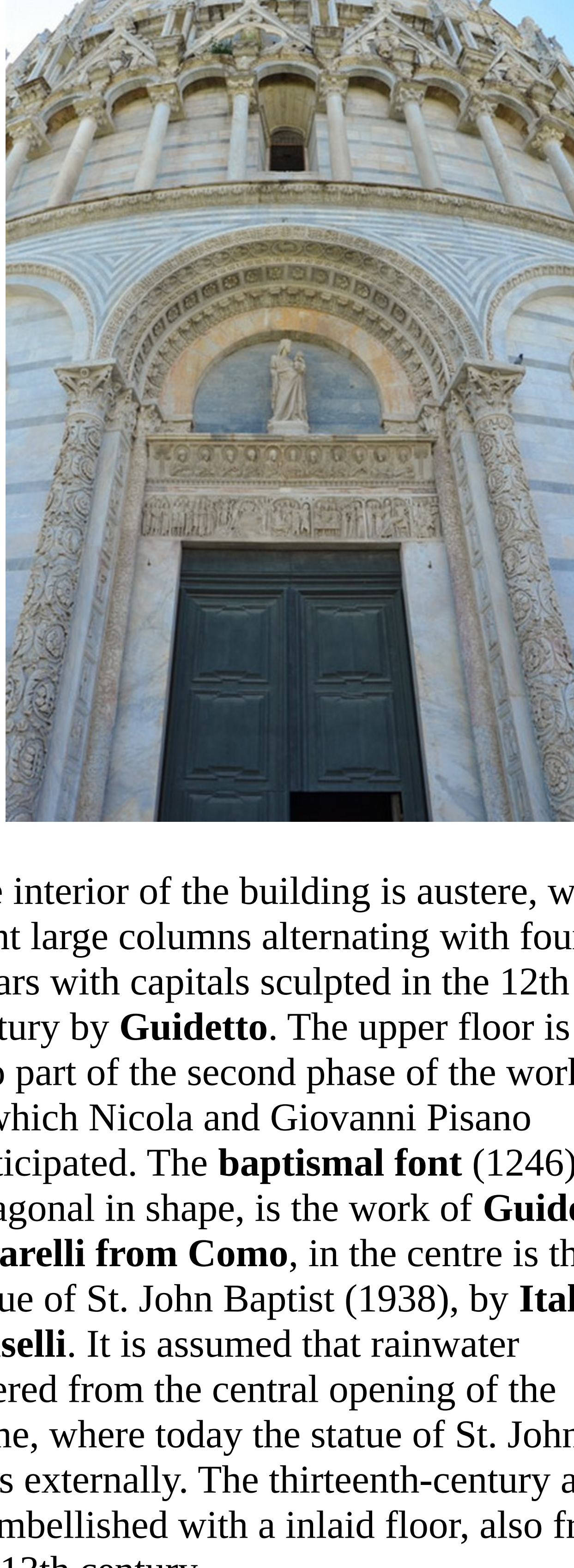
Baptistry of San Giovanni Battista, piazza del Duomo

The Baptistry of Pisa stands out for its considerable size: about 55 meters high and with a circumference of 107.24 meters, the largest in the world.



Construction began in 1153 by **Diotisalvi**, who signed the building on one of the internal pillars. Circular in plan, with strong references to the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, shows on the outside: a first level of blind arches with single lancet windows and four doors aligned with the cardinal points; on the second order a corridor of archivolted columns, created in the second phase of the construction works directed by Nicola Pisano. The monumental statues and the Gothic decorations are the work of **Nicola** and **Giovanni Pisano**, like the dancing statuettes above the spires. On the top floor, executed by Giovanni Pisano, we can see twelve mullioned windows. The marble aedicules are the work of artists of the level of Puccio di Landucccio and Cellino di Nese, authors of the dome (1365). The *statue of St. John* in bronze is by Turino di Sano da Siena, from 1395.

The entrance to the building today is the eastern door (once the exit towards the Cathedral), on the sides of which we find some biblical episodes and 11 scenes depicting the *months of the year*: each month is represented by a typical activity of that period, but September and October are united in a single narration, the harvest. The lintel tells the stories of St. John the Baptist, while a copy of the Madonna of the Colloquium by Giovanni Pisano today in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo.



The interior of the building is austere, with eight large columns alternating with four pillars with capitals sculpted in the 12th century by **Guidetto**. The upper floor is also part of the second phase of the works,

in which Nicola and Giovanni Pisano participated. The **baptismal font** (1246), octagonal in shape, is the work of **Guido Bigarelli from Como**, in the centre is the statue of St. John Baptist (1938), by **Italo Griselli**. It is assumed that rainwater entered from the central opening of the dome, where today the statue of St. John rests externally. The thirteenth-century altar is embellished with a inlaid floor, also from the 13th century.

The **pulpit** by **Nicola Pisano** (1260) is considered the most representative work of art of the Italian thirteenth century. The work stands on seven columns, supported by column-bearing lions and shows in its panels the life of Christ from the *Annunciation* to the *Final judgement*. The figures move like Roman statues, the **Virgin** lies as a **Roman matron**, clear reference to the sarcophagi of the Campo Santo (Phaedra and Ippolito). On the columns Virtues and Prophets have a dialogue like in the Parnassus, anticipating the typical lines of the Renaissance, such as the **Hercules**, or Fortress, repeatedly compared with Michelangelo's David.



The strange **acoustic effect**: the shape of the building, the material used, the distribution of the interior spaces given by the columns and the space between the two domes make the Baptistery create an incredible effect of acoustic resonance, better known as **Echo**.

The sound spreads throughout the space, like a continuous wave, rising in tonality to the point of suggesting the presence of an angelic choir. Every half hour the Baptistery staff performs a small demonstration for tourists: the effect is not to be missed.

