

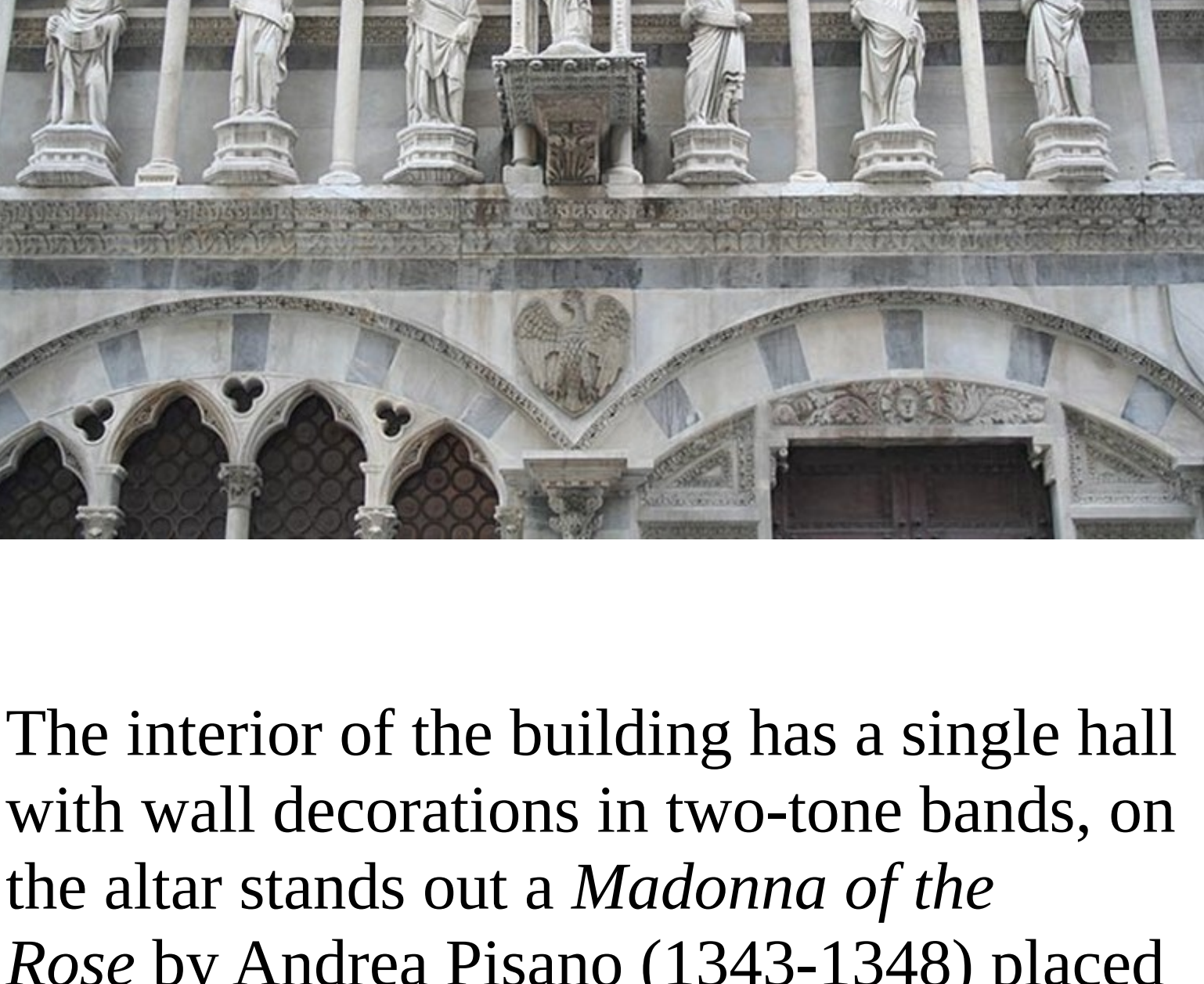
## Church of Santa Maria della Spina



The construction of the **church** of **Santa Maria della Spina**, wanted by the rich Gualandi family, probably went hand in hand with that of the **Novo bridge** (1182), destroyed in the 15th century. The façade is closed by three triangular pediments, decorated with rosettes and inlays, on which, inside small aedicules, there are the statues *of the Annunciation* (on the sides) and the *Redeemer*, works of the school of **Andrea Pisano**. The central aedicule there hosts the *Madonna and Child with Angels* by **Giovanni Pisano**.

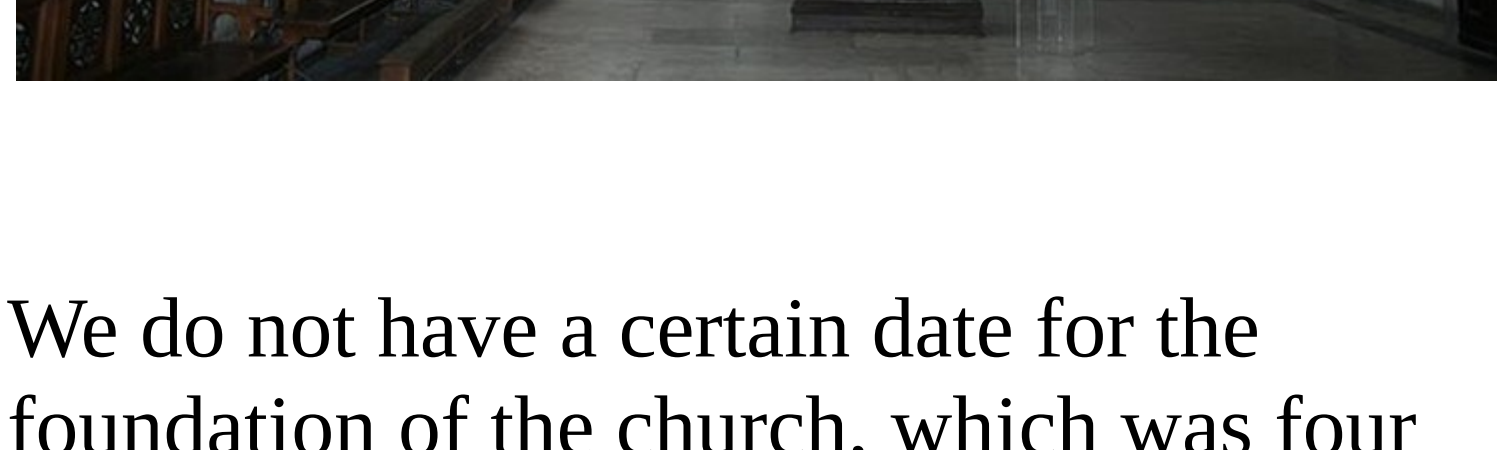


On the side is a gallery of statues, *Christ* and *Apostles*, attributed to Giovanni, like the statues of the eastern side. On the high pyramidal spires there is a *Madonna and Child with Angels* by **Nino Pisano**.



The interior of the building has a single hall with wall decorations in two-tone bands, on the altar stands out a *Madonna of the Rose* by Andrea Pisano (1343-1348) placed between *Saints Peter* and *John the Baptist*, by **Nino** and **Tommaso Pisano**.

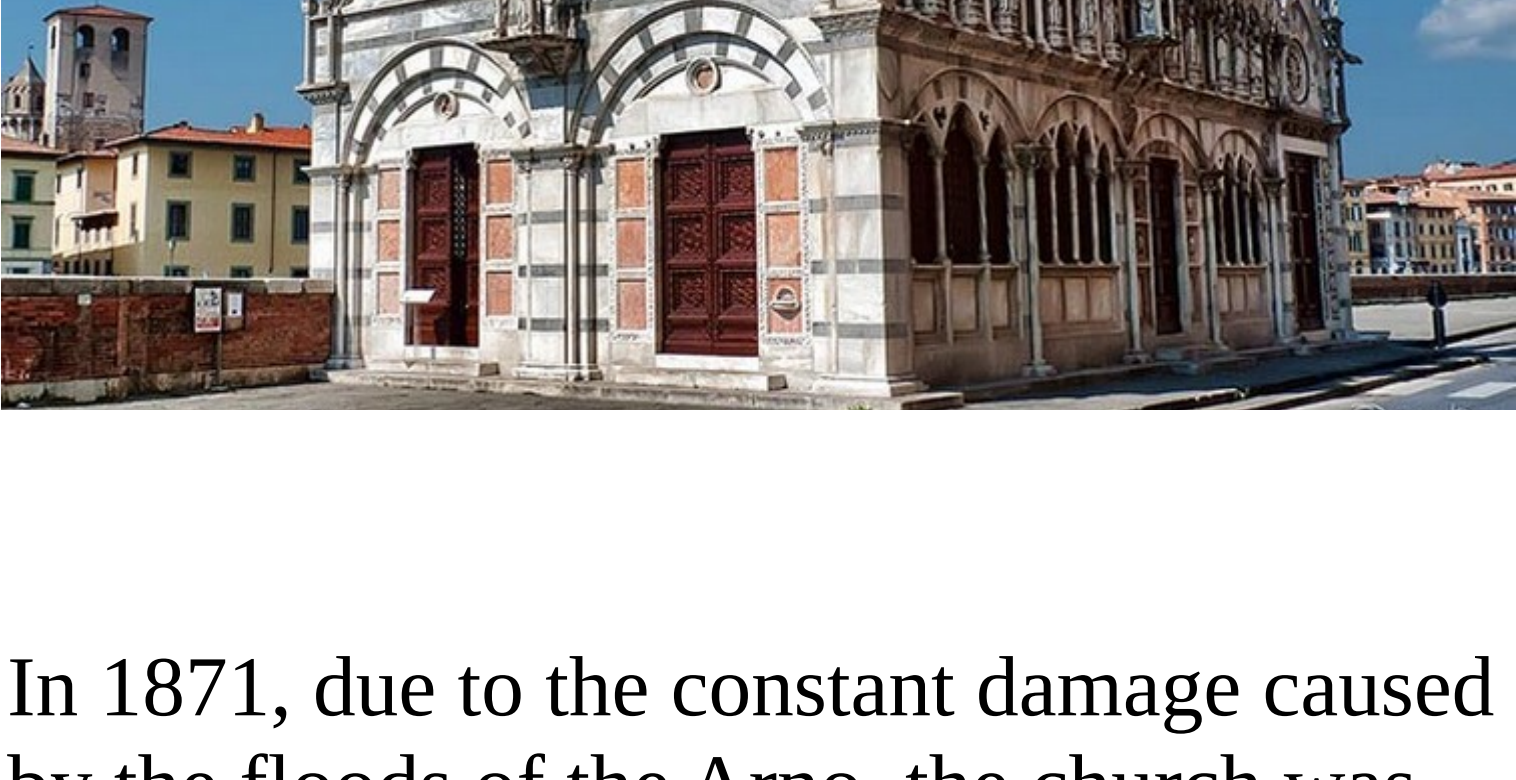
On the counter façade there is a copy of **Madonna del Latte** by Andrea Pisano (1343-1348), icon of the city. The original is now kept in the National Museum of San Matteo.



We do not have a certain date for the foundation of the church, which was four meters below the current level, on the bed of the river, but we know that it had the name of oratory of **Santa Maria in Pontenovo**. In 1325, works started that led it to assume the **gothic** form that we can observe today.

The name **Spina** derives from the **relic** of the thorn of Christ's crown present in the building since 1333, left to the Longhi family by a wealthy merchant and later donated to the small oratory (today the relic is in the church of Santa Chiara).

The church is owned by the Municipality of Pisa and hosts temporary exhibitions.



In 1871, due to the constant damage caused by the floods of the Arno, the church was completely dismantled and reassembled in the place where we see it today. An operation that upset the critics of the century, who unleashed ferocious (and perhaps well-targeted) attacks. The architect who carried out this transformation was Vincenzo Micheli, with the approval of the commission of the Academy of Fine Arts of Pisa.

The works lasted until 1884. During the works, the Spina was rebuilt on 3 steps, its walls were raised by one meter, the original sculptures were replaced with casts (the originals are now kept in the Museum of San Matteo) and the sacristy, once facing the Arno, was never rebuilt.

During his stay in Pisa, **John Ruskin** (1819-1900), English writer, poet, painter and art critic, openly expressed his disagreement with the dismantling and rebuilding of the church by swinging his cane in the air. The first of Ruskin's frequent visits to Pisa dates back to the autumn of 1840.

