



BAPTISTERY

The Baptistery was built between 1316 and 1325, under the direction of Camaino di Crescentino, the father of Tino di Camaino, to serve as the city's baptismal church. Its structure extends under the final bays of the choir of the cathedral and is distinguished by the tall Gothic façade initiated in 1355 by Domenico d'Agostino and left unfinished when work was interrupted in 1382.

The exterior is characterized by three large splayed portals topped by a row of hanging arches supporting a cornice. Above this stringcourse are three two-light windows; the central one was bricked in during the sixteenth century.

The interior, divided into a nave and two side aisles under a Gothic vaulted ceiling, is an outstanding example of fifteenth-century Siennese art. The ceiling and walls are covered with frescoes by Benvenuto di Giovanni (Miracles by Saint Anthony of Padua, 1460), Pietro degli Orioli (Christ Washing the Apostles' Feet), and Lorenzo di Pietro, better known as "Vecchietta" (the ceiling frescoes of Articles of the Apostles' Creed, 1447-1450).

The center of the church is dominated by a magnificent Baptismal Font made of marble, bronze, and enamel between 1417 and 1431 by the leading sculptors of the period, Lorenzo Ghiberti, Donatello, Jacopo della Quercia, and Giovanni di Turino.