



1:80000 scale. Map created on Inkatlas.com. Copyright OpenStreetMap contributors (openstreetmap.org), OpenTopoMap (CC-BY-SA), 2021.

The numbering of the church refers to the **General Map of the Romanesque Hills Route**.

How to get to and visit the church of Santa Maria:

C/o the cemetery, Marentino (TO).

GPS Coordinates: Lat. 45.0615512 | Long. 7.8739879

Open the first Sunday of each month in the period from April to October, supervised by the volunteers. On request on other days.

Informations: +39 3392331563 +39 3208154902

www.comune.marentino.to.it

Local attractions in and around Marentino:

- Church of San Giorgio, Andezeno;
- Church of San Lorenzo, Mombello di Torino;
- Church of Santa Maria Maddalena, Avuglione;
- Castle and Museum of Plaster, Moncucco Torinese;
- Arignano lake.
- "Muri d'Autore" are murals depicting riddles; they are painted on the house walls in Marentino and passers-by are invited to solve the puzzles.

Local events and shows:

The traditional Festival of Honey, exhibition and market of food products and local handicrafts, the traditional appointment for the last Sunday in September, for producers, consumers and lovers of beekeeping as well as other tourists.



Social Promotion
Association

Information points and contacts:
Albugnano (AT), Abbey of Vezzolano

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Instagram: reteromanicadicollina



The Romanesque Hills Route
promotes knowledge and use of the romanese heritage of the local areas between the river Po and Monferrato.

With the collaboration of:



With the support of:

Municipalities and Parishes of Albugnano, Andezeno, Aramengo, Berzano di San Pietro, Brusasco, Buttigliera d'Asti, Casalborgone, Castagneto Po, Castell'Alfero, Castelnovo don Bosco, Cavagnolo, Cerreto d'Asti, Cocconato, Cortazzone, Lauriano, Marentino, Mombello di Torino, Montafia, Montechiaro d'Asti, Montiglio Monferrato, Portacomaro, San Sebastiano da Po, Tigliole, Tonengo.

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Church of Santa Maria

Marentino

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Abbeys and churches between
the river Po and Monferrato

Description of the local area

The church stands on a knoll, about 400 metres of altitude, to the north-east of Chieri, inside the cemetery of Marentino. The surrounding landscape is varied, with meadows, cultivated fields and vineyards, interspersed with groups of houses, with red bricks and roof tiles, like the nearby village of Avuglione.



Historical details

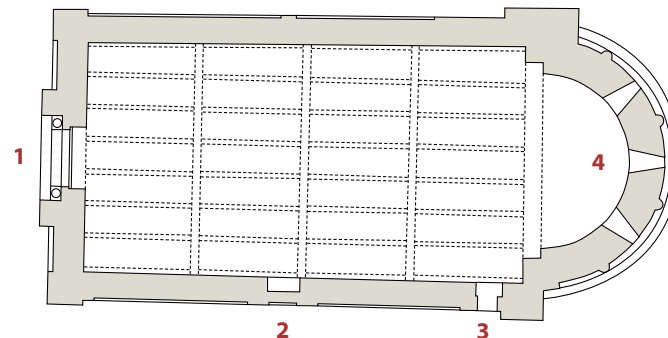
The church was built in the XIIth century, as a "plebeian" church, within the village of Marentino, given as a gift, together with the village of Brusasco, by the Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa to the Marquis Guglielmo of Monferrato. It appears for the first time in the list of the Curia of Turin in 1367. It maintained its parish functions until the population of the original village moved to the present village centre, which was inside a fortified structure and therefore safer. In 1584 it was replaced as a parish church by the present Santa Maria dell'Assunzione Church in the village centre, and the old church became the cemetery chapel, leading to its renaming as Santa Maria of the Dead. Since 1888 it has been classified as a



national monument. After its initial construction, the church was demolished and then rebuilt, re-utilizing the original materials and retaining the apse and some sections of wall. Further extensive work was carried out around the year 1400. The restoration in 1951 eliminated the baroque superstructures, added in 1761, and rebuilt the small arches of the crown of the apse. The latest restoration work, completed in 2011, brought the church and its frescoes back to their original beauty.

Description

The church consists of a single rectangular hall, 12 x 6 metres in size, closed by a semi-circular **apse**. The wall structure is in bricks, mixed with dressed stones of sandstone. The **façade** (1) has a central body covered by a small roof, in which the doorway is inserted, under a large arch and surmounted by a lunette. Between the arch and the lunette, there is a ring of sandstone decorated with an interwoven motif. Above that there is an elegant small double opening, with a series of blind arches, which continue along most of the perimeter of the roof space. Before entering the doorway, it is worth walking around the outside perimeter to look at the part of the **apse**. The decoration at the level of the roof is embellished with curious anthropomorphic sculptures in terracotta, with small symbols in the sandstone blocks. Similar examples of graffiti in the tradition of Monferrato can be found in the church in the cemetery of Avuglione. In the **middle of the south** side there is a **splendid arched doorway** (2) and beside the buttress of the apse the so-called "Door of the Dead", later turned into a **small window** (3).



The paintings

In the apse there are two **cycles of frescoes** (4):

- from the left, San Cristoforo carrying a child on his shoulders, a pilgrim saint (possibly San Giacomo) and San Sebastiano pierced by arrows. In the centre there is a Nursing Madonna and on the right three saints with San Valeriano in the centre;
- in the apse dome there is a Lamentation over the Dead Christ, on the left Santo Stefano and on the right Santa Lucia. The larger frescoes are the work of the painter from Chieri, Guglielmetto Fantini, influenced by Jacquerio, who also worked between 1435 and 1450 on the Baptistry of Chieri and in San Sebastiano Church in Pecetto. Fantini's cycle is accompanied by the date of October 1450, painted to the side of San Sebastiano, with the name of the person who commissioned it, "*presbiter Martinus de Panicis de Corteliano*".

