

The UNESCO site “Sacri Monti del Piemonte e della Lombardia”

The Sacro Monte of Varese is part of the UNESCO site “Sacri Monti of Piedmont and Lombardy”, recognised as a World Heritage Site since 2003. It consists of nine devotional routes erected between the end of the 15th and the beginning of the 18th century: groups of chapels and other architectural elements dedicated to various aspects of the Catholic faith. In addition to their symbolic spiritual significance, these complexes offer a splendid example of the integration of the architectural elements into the surrounding landscape, dotted with hills, forests and lakes; they also contain a remarkable artistic heritage in the form of sculptures and frescoes. Their history begins with the foundation of the Sacro Monte di Varallo, where the Franciscan friar Bernardino Caimi, at the end of the 15th century, reproduced some of the places in the Holy Land linked to the life of Christ.

The Sacred Mounts of Piedmont and Lombardy:

- **The Sacro Monte of Varallo** (VC - Piedmont): built at the end of the 15th century from an idea of Brother Bernardino Caimi. It reproduces the places of the Holy Land
- **The Sacro Monte di Orta** (NO - Piedmont): built starting in the 16th century. It is dedicated to episodes from the life of Saint Francis
- **The Sacro Monte di Crea** (AL - Piedmont): founded in 1589 on the initiative of Costantino Massino. Inspired by the Sacro Monte of Varallo, it was designed to renew the Marian devotion of the place
- **The Sacro Monte of Varese** (VA - Lombardy): designed starting in 1604 and dedicated to the Mysteries of the Rosary. Inspired by Friar Giovan Battista Aguggiari
- **The Sacro Monte di Oropa** (BI - Piedmont): built starting in 1620, it is dedicated to the life of Mary
- **The Sacro Monte di Ossuccio** (CO - Lombardy): presumably built at the behest of the Franciscans and local noble families from the mid 17th century onwards and dedicated to the Mysteries of the Rosary
- **The Sacro Monte di Ghiffa** (VCO - Piedmont): built between the end of the 16th century and 1617, it includes three chapels dedicated to the Incoronata, Saint John the Baptist and Abraham, the sanctuary and the 18th-century portico of the Via Crucis
- **The Sacro Monte of Domodossola** (VCO - Piedmont): undertaken in 1656 by the Capuchin fathers Gioacchino da Cassano and Andrea da Rho to reproduce the passion and death of Christ
- **The Sacro Monte di Belmonte** (TO - Piedmont): built from 1759 onwards to a design by the Franciscan friar Michelangelo da Montiglio, it is dedicated to the Passion and Death of Christ.

For further information: www.sacrimonti.org