



## HOSPICE OF THE THREE KINGS

You can find this point of interest in Menaggio - Path 1 - Stage 1

### INFORMATION

**Location:** the old Three Kings Hospice was located in via Porta 1, inside a yellow three floor plastered building preceded by a small yard. Nowadays its ground floor hosts the “Osteria il Pozzo” restaurant.

**Paving:** via Porta is paved with porphyry tiles.

**Architectural barriers:** please mind the stone post and fire hydrant – both of which are approx. 1 metre high – placed next to the corner of the building, on the right as you come into via Porta.

**Access:** as it is private property it is advisable to have a look at it from the outside.

**Services:** parking available in the area, automated teller machine.

**Leisure and Food:** hotels, cafes and restaurants nearby.

### DESCRIPTION

(Silvia Fasana)

Legend has it that the “Hospice of the Three Kings” was founded in 1163, when the procession that was taking the relics of the three Wise Men, stolen from the city of Milan by the Imperial Chancellor Rainard von Dassel after the city was destroyed by Frederick Barbarossa, stopped in Menaggio. In actual fact, the date of establishment of this historic charitable institution of Menaggio, which for centuries, in conjunction with the Oratory of St. Martha, engaged in giving hospitality to travellers and assisting pilgrims and the sick, remains unknown. The publication *Novecento anni da Mengaldo (1095-1995)*, edited by the Parish, carries a description from 1707: «at the higher floor of the hospice – the building whereof had been restored in 1666 (as shown in a fresco with the Magi and Baby Jesus, visible on the external wall) – there were “two rooms, with two well arranged small beds to accommodate pilgrims, which in this case were two priests”, while at the lower floor, with more room available to accommodate pilgrims, lived a woman, “of sound morals and good reputation”, who acted as keeper in exchange for the right to live in the building. The author of the description also writes that “in addition to hospitality, single pilgrims are also offered a monetary aid, depending on needs” and, when required, “free hospitality is extended to as many as three days”. The hospice was managed by a “Minister” (a layman from the Community of Menaggio) and two “Deputies”, elected for a three year term, alternatively by the Collegiate Chapter and the Community of Menaggio. Each year the Minister had to report the activities of his administration to the Archpriest, at the presence of the two Deputies». Thanks to bequests and donations, the Hospital’s management was able to engage in other charity work, too, such as teaching to the poor children of the village, looking after the sick and poor for free, or paying dowries for the benefit of “spinsters” lacking means of their own. However, due to increasing economic difficulties, the institution was suppressed at the end of the 18th century; the Hospice building, already a public property in 1820, was then transformed into a private home.