

THE BENEDICTINE HAMLET

The convent-oratory, along with the Tower and the little church, was part of the Benedictine Monastery established in 1139, when the Bishop of Treviso, Gregorio Giustiniani, consecrated the church and abbey to Saint Helena and entrusted its care to the abbot of San Benedetto Po in Polirone. In 1294, the church and monastery came under the jurisdiction of the convent of San Cipriano in Murano, as stated in a decree issued that same year by the Bishop of Torcello. Later, the Monastery became one of the Hospices of the Archpriesthood of Mestre, offering shelter and refuge to travelers and pilgrims. In fact, it is referenced as such in the tithe records from 1297–1330.



VISITS - CONTACTS

Visits: From early May to late October, every Thursday from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM.

Visits are hosted by a group of volunteers who welcome guests and share the history and events related to the Church, the Tower, and their surrounding area. To book visits at other times, email: torre-antica.tessera@libero.it

Contacts:

Facebook: Torre Di Tessera

Instagram: [torre_tessera](https://www.instagram.com/torre_tessera)

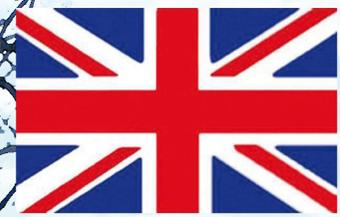
WALKS ON LAND AND WATER:

<http://www.popiliaannia.altervista.org/passeggiate-patrimoniali.html?cb=1714986570939#>;

<http://www.popiliaannia.altervista.org/pagina-719467.html>;

Bibliography:

- Parish of Santa Maria Assunta – Tessera (VE). 2023, "Pietre vive"
- Pellizzer L., 2023, "Da San Martino di Campalto a Terzo di Tessera". Terra Antica
- Vivian G. P., 2020, "Salicornie"



**The Ancient Tower and
the Benedictine Hamlet of
Tessera:**

A Heritage to Be Valued

THE TERRITORIAL CONTEXT OF THE ANCIENT PIEVE OF TESSERA

The study of the Tessera territory cannot be separated from an understanding of the historical and geomorphological context of the lagoon edge and its inseparable connection with the islands, with Venice, with the mainland, and other coastal centers.

The lagoon edge is an environment where human presence has been documented since the 6th millennium BC. Its most important settlement center was the city of Altino, the main emporium and Adriatic port of the ancient Veneti people and a flourishing lagoon capital during Roman times.

Altino is a "Venice before Venice" and holds an archaeological area of inestimable value. While Altino can be considered the "capital center" of the lagoon edge from an archaeological point of view, other communities developed around it, leaving visible traces of their presence: Ca' Noghera, Tessera, Campalto, Dese, and Favaro Veneto.

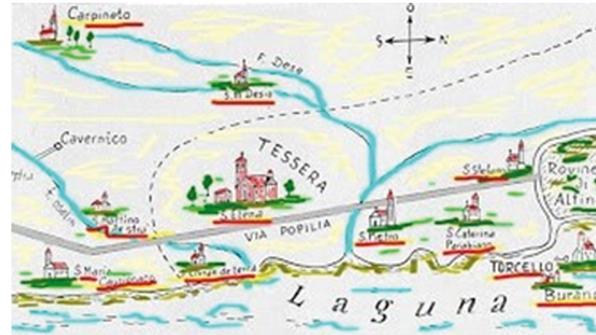
Among these, Tessera played a significant role, acquiring the title of Pieve (rural parish), because within the religious hierarchy, it had extended jurisdiction covering what today ranges from Altino to the entire Municipality of Favaro (see the ancient map from the 12th century). Each of these centers had a religious outpost led by monks, friars, or priests, who also managed ecclesiastical and spiritual economic activities. In the same map, we can see that Tessera's church was already dedicated to Saint Helena

The ancient map also shows how the territory of the Pieve of Tessera was crossed by the important Roman consular road Popilia (Annia), from which a wide network of connections branched throughout the Northeast and, via the Claudia Augusta, reached Bavaria. Furthermore, its proximity to the lagoon made it one of the preferred points of trade exchange with Venice, thanks to the Palade, which were actual toll gates where boats paid duties to transport goods from the mainland to the islands.

Over the centuries, the Patriarchate of Venice managed to accumulate many woodland and meadow properties in the lagoon edge areas, rich in waterways and mostly leased to peasant families who cultivated the land.

The religious orders present provided education to these families, and religious worship was a strong bond for community development. This social structure persisted until it was disrupted by the industrial revolutions of the 19th century and the subsequent wars, which led to the liberal-democratic order of Italy and the West. With Italian unification, ecclesiastical properties were sold or auctioned off, as happened with the territory of Tessera, the Church of Saint Helena, the Ancient Tower, the Benedictine Hamlet, and many other religious estates and farms

ANTICA MAPPA SEC. XII CHE INDICA I CONFINI DELLA PIEVE DI TESSERA E LE SUE CHIESE, L. GALLO, LA PIEVE DI TESSERA..., 1960



THE ANCIENT TOWER

The most prestigious structure in Tessera is the historic Tower. It was erected by the Republic of Venice between the 9th and 11th centuries as a watchtower against pirates who plagued the upper Adriatic. It was part of a system of surveillance and protection of Venice, together with its counterparts in S. Zulian, S. Ilario, Botenighi, Bebbe, S. Donà, and Caorle.

The Tower of Tessera is an example of Ravenna's artistic culture, influenced by the Romanesque-Byzantine context. Cylindrical in shape, it is still well preserved, standing 24 meters high with a base circumference of 14 meters. The base is made of trachyte blocks, and it narrows at the top, where the belfry opens with double-arched windows. Inside are two bronze bells, one of which bears the casting date of 1509. The masonry is composed of altinelle—small bricks likely salvaged from the ruins of Altino and used for flooring in the late imperial period.



THE LITTLE CHURCH

On November 30, 1089, Bertaldo da Carbonara, son of Drudone and Archdeacon of the Church of Treviso, donated the Church of Saint Helena (a Romanesque-Byzantine-style building probably erected on a preexisting chapel) to the Monastery of San Benedetto in Polirone (Mantua), along with 15 mansi (units) of land he owned.

The first was located in Saint Helena, the second in Terzo, while the others were scattered throughout the surrounding area. This donation, described in the land register of the Patriarchate of Venice, is considered the founding act of the little church.